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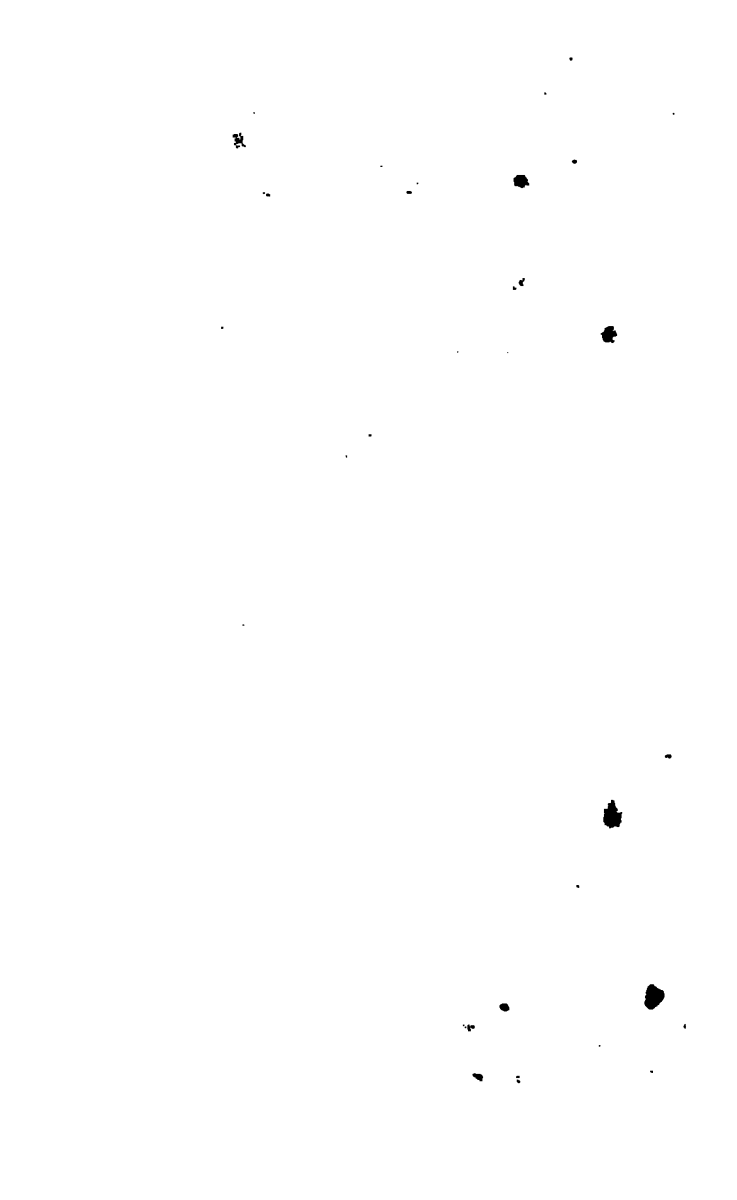
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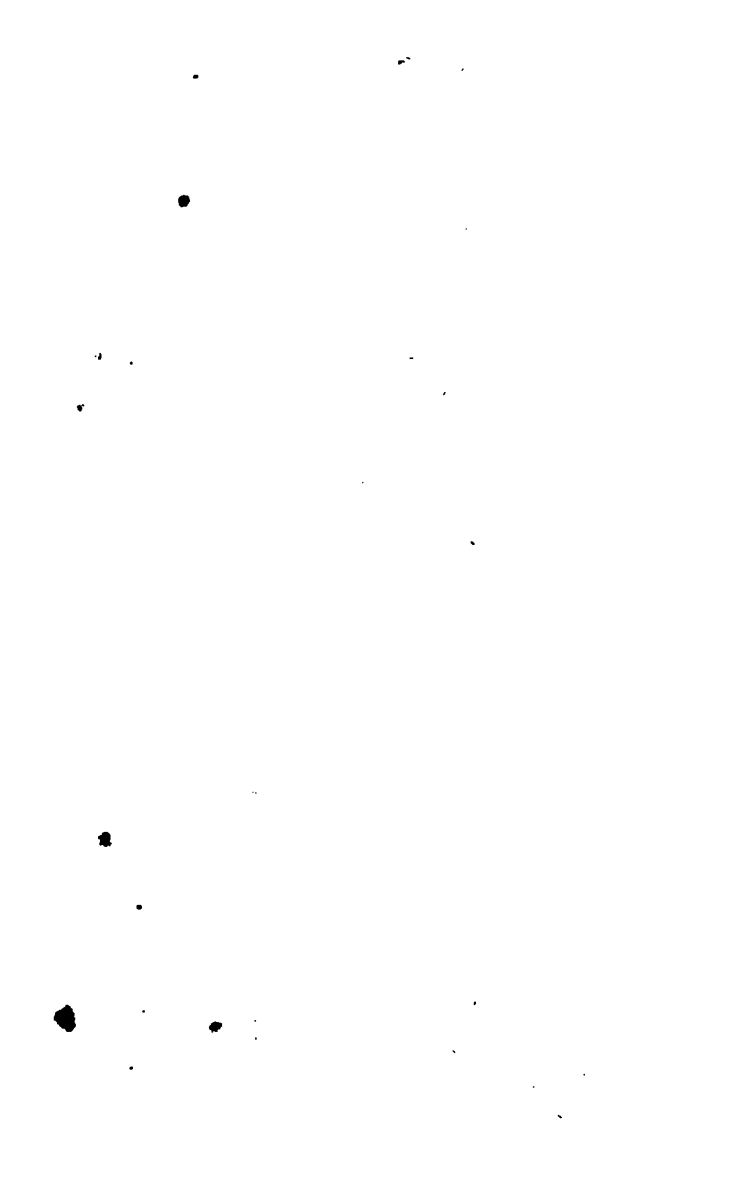
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Morals







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THE

# YOUNG MAN'S FRIEND.

*Gift of Mrs. J. B. Muzzey*

BY A. B. MUZZEY.

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"Above all things, reverence thyself."

*Pythagoras.*

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SECOND EDITION.

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TO  
THE YOUNG MEN  
OF  
THE CAMBRIDGE-PORT PARISH,  
THIS LITTLE VOLUME,  
PREPARED ORIGINALLY IN THE FORM OF  
LECTURES,  
DELIVERED IN THEIR PRESENCE, AND PUBLISHED  
BY THEIR REQUEST, IS AFFECTIONATELY  
Dedicated,  
BY THEIR  
FRIEND AND PASTOR.





## P R E F A C E .

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So many valuable treatises, addressed to Young Men, are already before the public, that he, who adds to the number, is bound to say a word of explanation.

My object in this little book is somewhat different from that of any I have yet seen. We have many Manuals of Politeness for Young Men; several on their Religious duties; and one, "The Young Man's Guide," which I take pleasure in especially recommending for its Chapters on Physical Education. But it seemed to me, that a few thoughts, relating more exclusively to the peculiar Moral Dangers and Duties of the Young Men of our Country, might not be lost on the community. It is with this view that I offer these pages. The perils of this class of our citizens call for trumpet-tongued warnings. But a still, small voice, if inspired by a sincere earnestness, will not, I have thought, utter itself in vain.

I have written for the many, laying no claim to originality, but stating common truths in no uncommon manner. The reader will find in this work no theories of philosophy, not a word of mere speculation. Had the writer a capacity for such productions, they would be entirely misplaced in a popular address to Young Men, immersed in secular pursuits.

It should be added, that the Chapters which follow, were given, substantially, by the Author, in a course

of public Lectures. This circumstance will account for what, in some instances, might otherwise seem an inappropriate style. The form has been changed, and occasionally a paragraph added, which was better suited for the eye than the ear.

I may have mistaken the wants of the times, or, misled by partial friends, have overrated my own ability to meet them. But of one thing I am sure; no one can feel a more cordial interest than I do, in the well-being of those now taking the high station of the Republican Citizen among us. Their hearts present a noble field for the rich fruits of honor, virtue, and faith; and no one can contemplate this field with more fervent hopes than myself. Our Young Men respond, I believe, to every sincere effort for their good. That this humble volume may do something to elevate, and give a right direction to their generous impulses, is the earnest desire of their Friend,

THE AUTHOR.

Cambridge, Dec. 8, 1836.

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#### ADVERTISEMENT TO THE SECOND EDITION.

In offering to the public another edition of this work, the author has only to say, that, grateful for the unexpected favor shown in the rapid sale of the first edition, he has endeavored to render it more worthy of the indulgence of the community, by a few alterations and amendments.

November, 1837.

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THE  
YOUNG MAN'S FRIEND.

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CHAPTER I.

IMPORTANCE OF THE PERIOD OF YOUTH.

**Capacities** — The Intellect then receives a permanent impression — **Moral Powers** — Conscience as yet unperverted — **Examples** of excellence in early life — **Opinions** now formed — **Principles** neglected, or established — **Habits** to be now formed — **Means of Happiness** chosen.

THE moral condition of the young, especially of young men, cannot fail to excite always a peculiar interest in the minds of the wise and the benevolent. Whether we regard their own individual good, the welfare of their domestic connections, the prosperity of the country which they inhabit, or the well being of the Christian faith and of religious institutions, it will be

seen, that all these bid us guard well the intelligence and virtue of those destined soon to occupy the places of their fathers. In the hope of doing something to awaken a sense of their high obligations, and of inciting them to press toward the elevated mark now set before them, I propose to address a few thoughts to my brethren, the Young Men of this community.

The topic offered for your consideration in this chapter, is *the importance of the period which intervenes between childhood and maturity.*

And, first, we remark, that the Capacities of that age are greater than those of any other, which precedes or follows it. Children are influenced to a very great degree by their parents, teachers, and elders. They are susceptible of being guided, restrained, or excited by others, it is true, far more easily than youth, but not of judicious self-direction. Manhood in its meridian vigor may accomplish more, in some important respects, than can be done at an earlier stage. But it is still less given, — at least it proves so with a large majority, — to decided and constant improvement, more the creature of habit, more reluctant to adopt new views and opinions, and less pliant in all respects than youth.

This again is the period when the Intellectual powers receive a permanent bias. It is now we may gain useful knowledge with most ease and advantage. The mind is as yet free

from distracting cares. Memory is now, in most individuals, more susceptible and retentive than in subsequent years. Nor have error and prejudice yet shed on the mind those blighting influences they sometimes produce. If the intellect be at this stage suitably excited, and accustomed to a manly independence, there is much to be reasonably anticipated in its future growth. But if, on the other hand, it be left to inaction, and to a leaden indifference to itself, and all the high ends for which it was bestowed, then alas for the mind of the man. Should he, in coming years, desire to improve this noble faculty, it will then have contracted a stiffness which determination, all powerful as it is, can hardly subdue.

Now also is the period when the great question is usually decided, whether the imagination or the judgment is to preponderate ; and hence whether the individual is to be respected in the world, to fill honorable and useful stations, or be a companion of the undeserving and simple ; whether by his wisdom, prudence and good sense, he shall choose the right calling, and walk steadily therein, or, by a deplorable fickleness, incur the doom, "unstable as water, thou shalt not excel." Many a man, with the best natural abilities, has failed in his worldly vocation from the simple want of a well balanced mind in his youth. There is nothing which may alarm our friends more

reasonably, than to observe, that in the outset of life we are filled with schemes and projects ; abandoning continually certain and honest gains for new experiments, and unchangeable in nothing but our love of change.

• The age under consideration is, moreover, that which gives an impress to our Moral capacities. The foundation of virtue is laid in a pure conscience. To possess this, we must have correct moral perceptions, a quick sensibility to excellence, and a generous love of it. But the child cannot comprehend the whole sphere of moral duties. He may have a good conscience, so far as his knowledge extends. But one property of this guiding faculty is, that it may be more and more enlightened. You may say then, that the aged Christian, aye, the mature man will possess always a purer conscience than the youth. This would follow were instruction all that is needed in the case. But so it is not. The capacity to receive this instruction is another essential quality of a good conscience. And when is our moral sensibility so acute, and our perception of the lights and shades of character so vivid, as in youth ? This then is peculiarly the day of our moral trial. If we would hereafter maintain our integrity, the standard must be set up now. Length of years may diminish our ability to choose the right and shun the wrong. False maxims, and pernicious practices, and seductive



influences will multiply around us. And who can say that our visions of excellence may not ere long be dimmed ; and with the progress of life evil be called good, and darkness light ? The power we shall evermore need is now in our hands. To-morrow it may be irrevocably gone from us.

The preceding remarks are sustained by a catalogue of eminent examples. It is a remarkable fact, that those, who have filled the high stations of fame, were nearly all distinguished when young men. Washington was Commander-in-Chief of all the armed forces of Virginia at 23. Burke was elected member of Parliament at 26. Mozart, the pride of musicians, died at 35. The present Chief Magistrate of this Commonwealth (1836) was inaugurated Professor in Harvard University at 21. Martyn was engaged in his mission in the East Indies at 25. Buckminster had attained his greatest distinction as a preacher before the same age. Newton at 30 had reached the height of his fame. La Fayette was but 23 at the siege of Yorktown. Fisher Ames had reached his utmost celebrity at 34. Young man, emulate these examples ; be conscious of the powers you possess. In whatsoever walk of life Providence has placed you, begin now to fill your station with fidelity ; and honor and success will attend you ; and there is no excellence, to which you may not reasonably aspire.

Youth is important, in the next place, because it is the time when we form Opinions on the great practical questions of life. In an enlightened community, like ours, there are continual discussions, both by the press and the lips, on those subjects that affect vitally our present and eternal well-being. Nothing is more easy than to take sides on these questions. It is done often in the most thoughtless manner. And yet what interests are involved in the decision.

Take, for example, the truths of Religion. A young man is thrown into a place where are many sects of believers, and where conflicting doctrines are maintained, doctrines which are defended on all sides with zeal and confidence. What ground shall he take? Will you counsel him to join the most popular denomination? Shall he follow the smoothest and most easy path? Shall he go with his favorite companions and friends? Is it right that he consult his pecuniary interests, in the choice now to be made? Would you have him retain the prejudices of his early education? Or would you say to him, "judge for yourself, make the Bible your sole guide, and take if need be the road to self-sacrifice, and work out your own salvation?" There are thousands daily forming, if not professing to form, their religious opinions in each of these ways; and can it be a trivial point which they pursue?

No young man, who understood the magnitude of the consequences, that will follow the choice he is here called upon to make, could do it inconsiderately or rashly. He would feel a solicitude and a sense of responsibility, which would render it almost certain that his decision would be correct.

There are other questions constantly agitated around us, on which the young man is called with more or less importunity soon to decide. Among these, Political matters hold with us no insignificant rank. But I leave the special consideration of that subject for a subsequent chapter. How many moral and philosophical subjects are now submitted, through the advance of education, to the minds of nearly all our young men. And the conclusions at which they arrive, the manner of their reflecting upon them, nay, the fact that they do, or do not reflect upon them at all is of vast moment. This is especially true of all the great moral questions. You may believe with the free-thinker that morals no less than religion are of trifling concern, and adopt for your motto, "let us eat and drink, for to-morrow we die." Or you may side with the stern religionist and hence say that morality is a secondary pursuit, and learn even to speak and think with contempt of mere good morals. Or you may hold that without morality there can be no solid foundation for character, and no real religion. Do you doubt

that unspeakable interests are connected with the reception of either of these views? If you do, time will show your mistake. There are many inquiries respecting the distinctions between right and wrong, the origin and authority of conscience, the extent of human selfishness, and the basis of genuine benevolence, which the young man can never pursue without either strengthening or impairing his virtue. He should never therefore regard the formation of an important opinion as a trifling affair.

This period is to be valued beyond any other in life, furthermore, because we then either establish, or neglect to establish Good Principles of action. In childhood we conduct much as directed by our superiors. The word of a parent is then our law. Guardians and teachers exert the chief influence, either directly or remotely, to which the mind and heart are at that age exposed. Yet the problem is by no means then solved, whether vice or virtue, religion or the world is to rule our spirits. We are about to launch on an ocean encircled by shoals and rocks. The compass will be placed before us, and its uses explained. We shall be furnished with maps and charts. But to use these helps aright, to take timely observations, and make proper soundings will be left solely to ourselves. And although the worth of thorough instruction, of being governed and educated well in childhood, can scarcely be estimated

too highly, yet self-instruction and self-government are, after all, the great pivot on which our weal or woe are to turn.

How intensely then must the Christian and Philanthropist watch the first movements of a youth. With what anxiety must all, who feel the least interest in the issue, inquire what report the world is now giving of his prospects and promise. Is he governed by principle? Can they see that in this trying crisis he is forming good sentiments? Does he seem to act from reflection? Is he just, benevolent, and pure? If instead of these traits he exhibits a reckless disregard of the truth, of duty, and of the rights and feelings of others; or if he conduct by fitful inequalities, is moved by the impulse of the moment, and thoughtless of consequences, it augurs mournfully for his future course and condition. It shows that, if he ever attain the qualities to be most earnestly desired in this life, it will be through a painful process. Many an hour must he give to bitter penitence. Long will this thoughtless career disturb his coming days. Much must he undo, and heavily toil up those steeps, down which he precipitately threw himself.

We shall estimate the morning of life still more highly, if we consider the difficulty of changing our course in after years from the power of Habit. This part of our nature exerts a momentous influence on our moral and intel-

lectual condition. When allied with virtuous principles and correct sentiments, it renders an invaluable service. But it exerts the same influence in hastening our spiritual decline, when connected with impure principles and corrupt dispositions. It is as mighty for evil as for good, and, — what gives it a fearful interest, — its approaches are often insensible; its most terrible desolations originate in methods scarcely perceived at the time by their unhappy victim.

But at what period of life are our habits most decided and inflexible? Not certainly in youth. Then the whole man is pliant, susceptible of change, more easily biassed to the right or the wrong, than at subsequent stages of life. If the intemperate man has not yet reached his meridian, we cherish hopes of his reform. So of every vice. He, who is not hardened in falsehood, in dishonesty, or in sensual indulgences by age, may, we still think, be converted from the error of his way. But each year that passes diminishes our expectation of this event. The chains become at length riveted, the manacles immovable; so that in the strong image of Scripture, when the "leopard can change his spots," may the depraved one, "learn to do well."

Now then, young man, is your "accepted time." If you allow yourself to trifle with the truth, the time may come when your word will no longer be taken. The first deviation from the course of integrity will seem very small. But

remember that the experience of thousands has shown that this small deviation is the forerunner of consequences, which they would have shuddered to anticipate. We never become suddenly wicked. Let a gross temptation be presented to us while yet innocent, and we say to it at once "Get thee behind me, Satan." But let vice be mingled in small proportions with the cup of pleasure, and the unwary imbibe the draught. Look at the bold and unprincipled Infidel. How did he reach this height of iniquity? Not in a moment; he did not bound from faith in the gospel to a contempt of its teachings. No; he began with a smile in sacred places, and at sacred things. "There is no harm," said he, "surely in this." Next he joined the company of those who had a little less reverence than himself for holy subjects. The sly insinuation, and the coarse jest led on to unblushing ridicule. What mirth had commenced, vanity increased, and sin confirmed. Know then, that, if in youth you make light of principle, integrity, or any subject connected with virtue, or any person associated in your mind with the Church, or with the advancement of religion, it may need only the opportunity, the example of others, to place you in after life among those who scorn the names of piety, goodness and truth.

How interesting is the contemplation of a character the contrast of this. Here wisdom

was made the early choice. Reflection led to fixed principles. These have awakened pure and generous affections. Hence have arisen correct habits. And habit is fast ripening the fruits of excellence. In a life thus led, the actions are so ordered as to strengthen the good motives. The right is not followed through a slavish fear, but from the love of it. Such an one does not obey the gospel because commanded to do so. That is the pupilage of virtue. He pursues excellence because he prefers it above all things else; his taste is on the side of goodness; he does not desire to tread the forbidden paths of sin. He would not do so even if he could with impunity. Lives there a man who does not respect such a character as this? In the bosom of every uncontaminated youth, I am sure, there is an admiration of these traits, and a true sympathy with them. How important then is this period. What should we not sacrifice rather than part with this purity! Let us realize that this is the day of our salvation, the day when stern habit may be so linked with our principles and our conduct, that we shall out-ride the dark storm of temptation; and find the Sun of righteousness a cheering guide through life, and through death.

The last circumstance, I would name as giving importance to the days of a young man, is the fact, that he is now choosing his great means of Happiness. This has been called our



"being's end and aim." We commence the pursuit of it with the dawn of life. But it is not until the process of self-government has begun within us, that our destiny in this respect is decided. We then look abroad through society, and judge who are the happiest, what business most favors this object, and how we shall most certainly secure it. One concludes, that ambition has gifts and distinctions to be chosen before every thing else. Another, that the pleasures of sense, of mirth, and wit, and the animal indulgences are highest and best. Another is sure that riches are a passport to felicity. This man gives himself up to literary and intellectual enjoyment. That resolves to seek goodness, virtue and religion, let him lose the whole world beside. Now it cannot be that each of these persons will be equally happy in the choice he is making. If outward acquisitions are the supreme good, then it is idle to expect much from inward treasures. But if these latter are the chief blessing of life, if we can truly enjoy nothing without a clean conscience, a praiseworthy character, and a hope of Heaven, then for a youth to set his heart upon some visible, worldly, or sensual object, as the summit of his wishes, is absolute infatuation.

Take then whatsoever view we may of your hopes and prospects, we cannot but feel that yours, young men of our country, is an age of inconceivable importance. United and

solemn voices now plead for your hearing. They pronounce this to you a period of unequalled Capacities, intellectual, moral, and religious. They declare it a decisive day, because your Opinions on all the great questions, that concern your present and future well being, are likely now to be formed. They speak of it as an era in which you are emphatically called upon to establish the best Principles of action. They tell you that Habit, that great arbiter of man's mortal lot, may soon give you a little less than unalterable character. They conjure you to remember, that now is the eventful period, in which you will say for all coming time on what you rely for your chief Happiness. Having summed up these weighty arguments, reason, religion, the present, the future, every consideration, human and divine, bid you pause, reflect and judge ; then fix the seal. Do it as you would were your whole coming fate to depend on the act. Do it as if the last opportunity now offered to secure all that you will ever secure. Regard this as the turning point, the all important moment of your being. Believe that the impression now to be made will be indelible.

It is with this view of yourself that I now ask you to peruse the pages that follow. I shall speak plainly, for I feel strongly on the subject. But I indulge the hope that if you feel with me, you will forget the style, and be lost in the subject.

## CHAPTER II.

### VALUE OF CHARACTER TO YOUNG MEN.

What constitutes a perfectly good character — Anecdote — Its special value to the Young — Anecdote of an English Chief Justice — Influence of First Impressions on success in life — Franklin — Self-respect — Influence on others — Character a permanent possession — Anecdote of Washington — How shall a praiseworthy character be established — Moral enthusiasm — Determination — Sheridan — Conditions — Small circumstances to be regarded — Poverty — Riches, how to be acquired, or the want of them endured.

SUPPOSE one to have passed through the years of his pupilage, to have finished the elements of his literary and moral education, and to be now at a suitable age to make choice of a future occupation.. The questions will arise with him, if he reflect as he ought, "What am I about to undertake? Why was I placed in this active scene and endowed with the powers I possess? Was it to make myself rich, to acquire, by whatsoever means, a large property?

Am I to seek first of all things freedom from care and molestation, to seek ease, enjoyment, and pleasure? Or was I intended to be the praise and admiration of all those around me? Shall I now set about gaining all the civil distinction, and all the power and honors I can grasp?" An accurate observation of the world will convince a young man, that he was not created for either of these objects. For he will find as much true happiness among those destitute of wealth and power, and unaccustomed to sensual pleasures, nay, far more peace and contentment, than among the rich, the titled, or the profligate. Either then he must abandon the pursuit of happiness, or search out some other channel of hope and action.

Those, who have passed the period of youth, and arrived at mature and experienced years, testify that virtue, A GOOD CHARACTER, is the great object we were made to seek. And they tell us that until we learn to act upon this truth we shall never be truly happy. "Let no man," said an Apostle to a young friend, "despise thy youth." That is, so live as to give no man occasion to despise thee on account of thy youth. Be so elevated by your upright conduct, your wisdom, your purity of language, and manly deportment, that all men shall respect you. It sometimes occurs, that men pay no heed to the words of another because he is young. Let not this be the case with you ;

but overcome by your excellence the prejudice against your age. This instruction applies with the same fitness to every young man, in whatsoever situation he is placed, as it did to him, who originally received it in his peculiar calling. It is as much for the interest, and as much the duty of all at that age to aim at eminent virtue, as it was that of the youthful Timothy.

It is the aim of this Chapter to show, *in what a perfectly good character consists*, — to speak of its *value to the young man*, — and of the means by which it may best be established.

*What then constitutes character?* Some define it to be a good name, that is, to be well spoken of, to have a fair reputation. But this is not, I conceive, its full, nor its best definition. Character is virtue, merit; it consists in permanent qualities. But reputation is of all things most fickle. To sustain a good name in a Southern State, for instance, one must, if his honor be impeached, challenge his opponent to meet him in a duel. In New England the commission of this act would be considered a disgrace. And in regard to very many actions, they are extolled in one age and condemned in another. And what this nation accounts praiseworthy, that will brand as the height of dishonor.

I allude to this distinction because it seems

to be less considered, especially by the young, than its importance deserves that it should be. Many think their character is exalted by their being elevated to office, whereas it is the man that dignifies the office, not the office the man. You will, sometimes, too, see a youth shrink from being seen at his employment, if it be a little less elevated in the common estimation than the pursuits of others. But if worth, inward excellence, be the basis of character, then any honest and lawful business is a thing of which no man need be ashamed. So an employment is respectable, if faithfully pursued, it can never injure a young man's character to be seen and known to be engaged in it. Let this be impressed on your minds. Think not to rest on the profession, art, or employment you now choose, for a good standing in society. No man of sense, none, whose opinion you need care for a particle, will judge you merely by your business in the world. And vain and weak are they, who will refuse to associate with you, and set a mark on your character, because your employment is a little less fashionable than their own. This shame of labor is often carried in our own times to a ludicrous excess. A Southern student, in one of our Theological Seminaries, complained recently to a distinguished Professor, that we had so few servants at the North. "I cannot even now," said he, "hire one to prepare fuel

for the fire I to-day need." "Show me," replied the Professor, "your wood. I am in want of exercise, and will supply your necessity." Did that Professor degrade himself by so doing? Did the student's character stand higher than his at the close of that day?

Reflect that the purpose of this life is to be pure, to have sound principles and right affections, and to manifest these by irreproachable conduct. These are what constitute a truly good character. We may gain a great reputation without having one of these qualities. Nothing is easier than to attract notice in the world. You may do this in some circles by a showy, extravagant dress, or by wearing mean apparel. In others, you have only to practise bold feats, such as profaning that name which others fear to blaspheme, or transgressing the decorum of the Sabbath, or deriding the authority of your parents, elders, or teachers, or taking a cup more than your neighbour can with impunity. But what a pitiful ambition is this! How unworthy so noble and elevated a being as man! He, who stoops to such means of distinction as these, is not indeed a man. He is but a child. Nay, I will not so dishonor that name. He has the vanity of a certain well-known animal, aggravated by human responsibilities; pride without principle, and unsupported even by the forms of dignity.

Let the young man, then, who desires to

establish a good character, fix his eye on the point before him with an unfaltering aim. Let him regard Inward Worth, a single-hearted and Christian deportment, as the basis of his work. "For whoso walketh uprightly, walketh surely." Benevolence, likewise, a generous regard for the welfare and happiness of others, is an indispensable element of a perfect character. So also, and above all, is a sense of accountability to God, without which virtue and morality have no stable foundation. If to these traits we join Perseverance, Industry, and a just Independence of spirit, we have a model of true excellence, that "something immense and infinite," which Cicero held up to his pupils as their mark. And better than all, it is that prize and high calling in Christ Jesus, towards which inspiration bids us aspire.

But why should we desire *a good character*? And has it any peculiar value to the *young*? This is our second inquiry. The questions here asked may seem to some of you, my readers, superfluous. No one, you may say, can but regard character as of inestimable worth. In their moments of sober and deep meditation, I doubt not that all do consider it as the "pearl of great price." But is it usual, at this period of life, to consider piety, purity, philanthropy, a manly integrity and firmness of principle, the main object of pursuit, "the one thing" immediately "needful"? Are we not apt to



imagine that these things concern chiefly the aged, or those in the meridian of life? It is related of Sir Roger Chamloe, an English Chief Justice, that certain young gentlemen were once brought before him charged with a crime. Said one to his Honor, "Sir, we be young men, and wise men before us have proved all fashions, and yet these have done well in after days." They said this knowing that he had himself been a reckless youth. He, understanding the allusion, replied, "I was, indeed, in youth, as you are now, and I had twelve companions like myself; but *not one of them came to a good end*. If, therefore, you would come to this age, and this place where I now am, follow not my example in youth, but my counsel in age; lest you meet in the way either poverty or the gallows."

This advice of the Judge has been given by many. Yet the young have not always followed it. They sometimes conceive that it will be just as easy, and just as well, to commence the formation of the Christian character to-morrow, as to-day. If we contemplate the erection of a building, we are careful, first of all, to form a correct plan. We do not raise the frame, and proceed with the work before being sure we are right. Every thing, we say, on the contrary, depends on beginning the whole as we ought. Shall the young man begin the great work of his moral, spiritual and immortal building,

just as he may chance? Shall he wait until forty, or fifty, before he is sure that his plan and specifications were drawn right? And yet it is sometimes thought, that we may pursue what pleasures we choose, until we are weary of the chase, and then set about the sober business of virtue and duty. But does not every one by so doing lose much more than he gains? I would by no means defend a prohibition of the innocent pleasures of youth. It is a season of buoyancy of spirit, and calls for excitements and recreations. But when pleasure is made the business of that period, and character is postponed and sacrificed to it, then, I maintain, we mistake the purpose of our being; and, taking the whole course of life into view, diminish our own happiness.

The difference between rational and moderate indulgences, and those of the senses alone, is radical and clear. The former, the amusements becoming our age and station, improve the health, and prepare us for renewed and more efficient exertions. The latter, all sensual and animal pleasures when pursued to excess, are a positive injury. They must, from their nature, be brief and fleeting. If you indulge in them immoderately, and with no respite, they terminate in pain. The frequent repetition of them cloy and disgusts. The intervals between them are filled with depression, and they unfit you by their very intensity

for those gentle, equable, and moderate enjoyments, which give life its chief zest. Xerxes offered a reward to the person who would invent a new pleasure. He was tired of his old enjoyments, and so are all who live for pleasure alone. Such pursuits undermine the health ; they wear out the body and bring on premature old age. They indispose us for our daily occupation, and make duty a tame, unwelcome pursuit. Yet into this path does every young man enter, who makes it his main study to multiply his outward gratifications ; and the longer he holds on this course, the farther will he wander from that only true enjoyment, inward peace. Until he repent, and retrace his steps, so that right, virtue, excellence, shall become to him soul-stirring words, he will at times be perfectly miserable, and yet perhaps wonder at it, and inquire, and never learn the reason of his sufferings.

Consider, young man, the value of a good character to you for another reason. It is doubtless your wish to be Respected in the world. You would escape the evil reports, and evil suspicions of others. Lay up then such a fund of good qualities, that your credit shall never be questioned. Be so remarkable for your veracity, that your word shall always be taken. Be so distinguished for your pureness, generosity and worth, that your name shall be unsullied. These are, — certainly in this com-

munity, — the sure reward of a praiseworthy character. Men delight to honor one whose goodness has been uniform. They place a prompt confidence in him who, by his steady adherence to principle, truly deserves it. You may see many, who relied on their wealth, their parentage, or some accidental advantage, disappointed in their hope of honor and respect. But you will never find the self-disciplined, self-educated, those who have real worth acquired by their own efforts, undervalued by those who best know them.

The young man is called, again, early to commence the formation of virtuous habits by a regard to the immense influence of First Impressions on his standing and success in life. The reputation now established must and will go with him, when he begins business for himself. And although reputation is not to be his main point, yet it is exceedingly important. If he be seen and known to be intimate with the vicious, or those of questionable morals, at this period of life, reports will be soon heard of it, and he will eventually forfeit his good name, that name without which he cannot prosper even in his worldly business. "The most trifling actions," it was well said by Franklin, "that can affect a man's credit are to be regarded. The sound of your hammer at five in the morning, or nine at night, heard by a creditor, will make him easy six months longer ; but if he sees you at a

billiard table, or hears your voice at a tavern, when you should be at your work, he sends for his money the next day." If you desire, young reader, a patron in business, there is no way to secure one, but by your correct deportment and solid merit. Be distinguished for industry, for truth, for fidelity to your employers, for undeviating rectitude of conduct, and for your frugal habits, and men of influence will rejoice to help you forward in life. Imitate him who placed for a sign on his shop the significant compasses, one foot to be fixed, the other in motion. Constancy and labor must be your hope in this world.

Resolve, next, to depend always on your worth alone. Keep no company in secret, which would blast your reputation, if discovered. Trust not to the success of stratagems and concealment. The risk is tremendous, for a disclosure would be fatal. Let an open, manly, and fair character be "the immediate jewel of your soul." You will stand then on a rock.

Think too of the value of Self-respect. Could we by art and caution sustain a good name with a hollow and false character, what would it profit us? Why do we desire to stand well in the world? Because, you answer, it will be for our interest, and our interest is our happiness. But is it nothing to our happiness, to enjoy a pure conscience? If you do not respect yourself, if you would despise another

man who should take the same course, which you are secretly pursuing, and in reality do despise your own motives and yourself, what avail you the confidence and the praises of thousands? You have no true peace within. Let, then, the first pillar you raise in your character be sound. Determine to be all you would pass for.

We may next remark that virtue, real goodness, is a spring of great Influence among others. The young man who desires influence may seek it by deceptive, low and unprincipled means. And with some this will succeed. But who are they? The best youths in society, those whom it is an honor to persuade and direct? No; the more base the means, the more degraded will be those they affect. Satan could never have reigned in Heaven. The poet assigned him his empire, where alone sin can rule, below. Look besides at the comparative numbers, which a vicious and a virtuous man can control. Whom do the majority respect and follow? The good, the pure, the deserving alone. A knot of young reprobates may idolize their leader; a party may follow a bad man, but the mass of mankind will not.

What gave Washington his unbounded sway over this nation? What is now gaining him homage among the wise and the good, both high and low, in all places wheresoever his name is known? His solid worth, the fact,

that the more you examine his character, the greater veneration you feel for it. Let an incident in his life illustrate this truth. In 1754, when he was but twenty-two years old, he was advocating the election of Col. Fairfax to the Virginian Assembly, in presence of a Mr. Payne, who favored a different candidate. Washington became earnest and made some remark which gave Mr. Payne offence. He in a passion lifted his cane and struck him to the ground. Washington wrote the next day a note requesting Mr. Payne to meet him at a certain hotel. This was very naturally taken for a challenge. How then was he surprised, when, on entering the room, Washington rose, and bowing, offered his hand with a smile, and thus addressed him : " Mr. Payne, to err sometimes is human nature, to rectify error is always glory. I believe I was wrong in the affair of yesterday ; you have had, I think, some satisfaction ; if you deem that sufficient, here is my hand, let us be friends." From that moment Mr. Payne was among the most ardent admirers and friends of Washington. And who can wonder, that such magnanimous conduct as this has made that name the admiration of the world ? Young man, if you covet power and influence, emulate this example ; cherish a just ambition, that of doing good to your neighbours, your associates, your country. Be at heart that which you hope to appear, so

that the better you are known, the more you will be esteemed.

A good character is to be valued, again, in early life, because it is a Permanent and secure possession. The advice is often given to the young, that they should invest small sums of money in stocks, that will from year to year increase in value. But how much better is the stock of growing virtues, correct principles, pure habits. Your property may be all taken from your possession. You may be so connected with the rapacious, the miserly and the fraudulent, as to lose it all. Misfortunes, a change in the times, a thousand accidents may rob you of this fond treasure. But if you have laid up treasure within, yours is a safe, a certain investment.

How much is a single unalloyed virtue in the soul of a young man worth? It was founded in secret, and was to outward appearance a small thing. But once founded, the first sum recorded, the principal invested, every year will enhance its value. Temptations, the frowns of the wicked, and the smiles of contempt; envy, jealousy, malice and all the powers of darkness may be leagued against him, but the assault will be vain. Stronger than the bolts and locks that shut on the bank's deep vault, — better than endorsements, bonds and pledges, — stronger than all earth and sin combined, is that deep, Christian, unfaltering



principle, whose germ was planted by the hand of self, and in the dew of youth. May you each, my young readers, prove this by personal experience. Without this possession you can never be secure against a moral bankruptcy. Be persuaded that you can take no step to such sure advantage in your worldly concerns, and of so inconceivable interest to your everlasting prospects, as to establish and act from correct motives, from the treasury of a character, that, on each trial in life, shall come forth "like silver from the fining pot, and gold from the furnace."

This view derives additional importance from the fact, that we are inseparably connected with one another. The virtue you establish in early life not only operates permanently on your own individual improvement and happiness, but it affects the welfare of every human being either now, or destined hereafter to be, subject to your influence. There are those who, each day that is passing, look to you for an example; and, as you conduct, so do they. If you love goodness, so do they; if you submit your words and actions to the law of the spirit, being pure, single-hearted, friends of God and of man, so do they. Hardly a right purpose is formed in your mind, before its effect is communicated to your near associates. This consequence may not always be perceived; but it follows as surely as that the light of the sun is reflected from the dependant orb of night. You are daily giving

advice, freely, perhaps thoughtlessly, to your companions and kindred. And there are those, — the number may be more or less, — but some there inevitably are, who listen to and regard it. Every trait you possess is thus telling on the character and destiny of all these individuals. Nor is this the limit of your influence. Those, who follow you, will affect, according to your counsel and conduct, either for good or evil, all over whom they have influence. Each of you is thus a "city set on an hill." You hold in your hand an instrument of inconceivable power. And the circle in which you daily move, and the multitude of concentric circles formed round it, each feels its weight. Aye, the generation to come shall feel it. Not only may a bright virtue break forth now, and beam on all who behold it; but another, and another age, an interminable succession of immortal beings may drink in light and life from that radiant point which you present, a single exemplary young man.

We pass, next, to our last inquiry. *How may a praiseworthy character be best established?* The first requisite, I would name for this purpose, is Moral Enthusiasm. By this I mean a deep, unquenchable love of moral excellence. How has the distinguished Poet, Orator, Artist, the man indeed who excels in any pursuit, attained his eminence? By an all-absorbing love of it, by being first fired with a thirst for

that one species of excellence. So let our young man gaze on a perfect character, meditate on inward purity and solid merit, until his bosom shall burn with a fervent desire to possess it. And if it be worth no more than this chapter has imperfectly described, does it not deserve this elevated rank? Can we indeed exaggerate its value? Revolve then in your mind, during your most secret and retired hours, the charms of virtue. Dwell on the beauty of holiness by day and by night, and you will soon have entered her sacred temple.

Determine, next, to acquire the prize that has kindled your soul. There is nothing in man so mighty for weal or for woe, as firmness of purpose. Resolution is almost omnipotence. To this the noblest achievements owe their accomplishment. Sheridan, one of the ablest men in English Parliamentary history, — though unhappily ruined by vice, — was at first timid, and obliged often to sit down in the midst of a speech. Convinced of, and mortified at the cause of his failures, he said one day to a friend, "It is in me, and it shall come out." From that moment he rose, and shone, and triumphed in a consummate eloquence. Here was true moral courage. And it was well observed by a heathen moralist, that "it is not because things are difficult, that we dare not undertake them; but they *appear* difficult, because we dare not undertake them."

Be then bold in spirit. Indulge no doubts, for doubts are traitors. Believe that you can be eminently virtuous, as correct in your principles, and as pure in your conduct and conversation, as any man living. If you do this, circumstances will favor you; temptation will be awed before you; and present honor and eternal glory will await you. He who is thoroughly in earnest, and who has set to his seal, that rich or poor, through good and through evil report, let it cost what it will, he will form a good character, that young man will not, he cannot fail of his end. He may not be rich; he may suffer from envy, and from the tongue of calumny; but sure as he lives, he will reach the mark which he placed before him. He will acquire what he would not exchange for mines of wealth, nor for the Hosannas of a world.

But let the youth, who aims at moral excellence, understand well the Terms on which alone it can be obtained. There is no distinction to be truly desired, that does not cost its proportionate price. If you would be highly esteemed among men, you must labor to that end. It is not our parentage on which we can depend. That may give us good blood, it is true; but without wisdom and virtue, it will be blood alone, not bones and sinews, not that which will brace us through the shocks and trials of life. We can trust for this power to nothing

but our own exertions, followed by the blessing of God. And if we toil through wearisome days, and serve years of unpaid apprenticeship to acquire skill in business, why should we not toil cheerfully and patiently in virtue's apprenticeship? If we have once known and felt, what it is to love those divine riches, a pure conscience and an unblemished name, we shall go at her bidding, constant as the rising sun, calmly and as of course to work out our moral redemption.

In the practical pursuit of our high aim, let us never lose sight of it in the slightest instance. For it is more by a disregard of small things, than by open and flagrant offences, that so many come short of Christian excellence. How has he, who entered the city as a poor waiting boy, become now a man of immense wealth? Because he laid up at first small sums, and let no opportunity escape to gain even a trifle. Be you, a child of light, aspiring to be inwardly rich, profited by his example. Lay up the least circumstances that will enrich your character. Where principle, duty, improvement are concerned, never should you say, "it is of little consequence how I shall act." Feel rather that all goodness is pure gold. Think not lightly of the smallest particle of it. There is always a right and a wrong; if you ever doubt, be sure you take not the wrong. Observe this rule, and every

experience will be to you a new means of moral advancement. Retirement and society, observation, business and recreation, reading, conversation, outward success and adversity, all things will converge toward the one high aim of your soul.

The future, so far as this world goes, is to the young man all uncertain. Perhaps he is now struggling with want, often discouraged and despondent. But let him not fear. The greatest living statesman in our land, was a poor farmer's son ; and he once said, on being asked what circumstances were most favorable to the formation of character, "Poverty." The remark was just. It is the school in which the brightest virtues have been, and may still be nurtured. It throws a man, where God intended he should rest, on his own efforts. You are straitened by necessities, and desire earnestly a competence, perhaps, a perfect independence. See that you make not haste to be rich, but use honest and honorable means. With these, if you set up moral excellence, as a standard higher and better than all things else, you may hope to be prospered in life. And you can then enjoy the gifts of a kind Providence. Or, if you should not succeed in your worldly calling, you will have that within you, which will support and cheer you in the darkest hour of adversity. And be assured, that nothing will so aid you to rise

from the stroke of misfortune, as the integrity of your past life.

Let not money, or fame, or pleasure be the chief mark before you ; but remember that "wisdom is the principal thing ; therefore get wisdom ; and with all thy getting, get understanding." Thus doing, character and reputation will be jointly secured to you. No man will despise your youth. For "honorable age is not that, which standeth in length of time, nor that is measured by number of years. But wisdom is the grey hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age."

Let me close this chapter by exhorting you, in view of the respect of mankind ; of success in your calling ; and of that high tower of support amid the trials and conflicts that await you, an approving conscience, to lay now a sure foundation. Let the corner-stone be deep, everlasting principle. Pursue with undivided soul all that is good and pure and true. Have a firm faith that if you do right, however trying the struggle it may sometimes cost, and though present appearances should seem unpromising, in the end you will come forth well, happy in yourself, and honored by the world.

With such a spirit the road before you will be straight, easy to find, and pleasant to travel. And its termination, — what a prospect is that ! — If spared to a good old age, peacefully will your silvered temples be laid in their last re-

pose. And from that blessed mount, up which the holy ascend, as they pass from the mortal to the immortal life, you will turn your eye back, with a serene and thankful satisfaction, on a manhood filled with beneficence and piety, and on a youth dignified and redeemed by the spirit of virtue. And then how calmly will you look to the future. The face of your Judge will beam upon you with a benignant mercy. For you can plead, "Though beset with infirmities, often sorrowing for my sins, and at best an unprofitable servant, I resolved in the morning of my days, to make wisdom and goodness my portion. Thanks be to Thee, who didst incline my heart to commence my probation aright. Thanks be to Thee, that all has now issued well."



## CHAPTER III.

### MORAL DANGERS OF YOUNG MEN.

Inexperience — Imagination — Reading — Anecdote —  
The Passions — Self-confidence — Bacon's remark —  
Indolence — Love of Gain — Overtrade — Corrupt  
Companions — Leaders — Being led — Ridicule —  
Intemperance — Infidelity, sustained by Ridicule —  
Gaming — Houses of Licentiousness — Theatre —  
A high Example.

It was a moving spectacle when the aged Patriarch Jacob, having, through a life of singular reverses and perils, served his generation and his God, and having finished his labors on earth, called unto his sons to gather round his dying bed, and listen to the last words of Israel their father. With prophetic skill the venerable old man lifts the veil of futurity, and summons them, one by one, to hearken as he unfolds their future lot. In that remarkable band of brothers, we find portrayed nearly all the diversities of the human character. As they advance, — and with what emotions they must have done it, — to their departing parent's bedside, we hear now the promise of a kingdom, a

sceptre to be transmitted for ages until "Shiloh," a mysterious, and dimly foreseen personage, shall "come." Now there approaches one destined to be a "servant unto tribute" and bondage. Here are to be showered profusions of wealth; there the iron hand of poverty will rest; cruelty and kindness, perseverance and fickleness; a blessing and a curse present us a picture of those striking contrasts which still mark the face of human society. But there is one, and the last save one, of the train, whose attractive mien and tried excellence obtain for him the highest benediction of all.

And why was it so? Had Joseph passed through no temptations and dangers? Is it mere harmlessness, a character of no firmness, decision, or energy, the child of a blind partiality who receives this best of blessings? No. We read, it is true, that Jacob loved Joseph while yet a youth more than all his brethren, and gave him a coat of many colors. But, a few years elapse, and we find him entitled, by his prompt resistance of the base temptations of Potiphar's wife, by his honorable distinction in the realms of Pharaoh, by his Spartan strength of principle, by a spirit of forgiveness to those envious brothers who had sought his life, by his saving from famine his father's family and the people of a whole Empire, indeed by his whole history, we find him entitled to all that favor shown him at the early age of seventeen.

The use I would make of this rare example is to introduce a description of the *Moral Dangers of Young Men*, and to excite, if possible, a resolution to overcome these dangers, as did the illustrious youth in question. The limits of a single chapter will allow us to notice but a few of the temptations that beset this period of life, and that in the briefest manner. Yet if we can discover the origin, and devise a method of deliverance from these, we shall ascertain thereby a power that will qualify one to resist every temptation.

The first of the exposures of this age is that which arises from the period itself, from its being one of Inexperience. If, as a recent writer has affirmed, "we learn nothing truly valuable except from experience," then is there much to be feared from the errors of the commencement of life. And how often do we observe that, through a single misstep on the threshold of this great temple, the world, an individual, however distinguished his native abilities, and however faithfully educated, has fallen, never to rise, hopelessly excluded from the high niche he had otherwise filled. The ear once charmed by the boisterous mirth of the gaming-table, has become thenceforth dead to the spirit-kindling calls of virtue. One glass of an inebriating drink, taken at a peculiar crisis, has sent a strange fever through the veins of a youth, that no medicine could heal.

In the morning of life Imagination runs its widest rounds. But reason, that all-controlling, godlike faculty, is yet immature. It lacks that self-poised vigor which experience alone can impart. We know, to be sure, that there are partial substitutes for this. The voice of friendly instruction may do much to furnish a moral outfit for life. But the instruction must be steadily obeyed.

An acquaintance with books may do much to subserve the same purpose. But the books must be rightly chosen, and judiciously perused. And so are we deluged with publications in this age of authors, that I was about to name Reading as giving rise to one of the present dangers of the young and unwary. And to illustrate this remark, I will call your thoughts for a moment to a single class of writings. I cannot but think that a majority of the novels and romances now in our Circulating Libraries, and I will add of those now flowing from the press, instead of supplying to the young their want of experience, mislead and betray them. They give a false glare to their coming years; and instead of describing the world as it is, lead them to anticipate some fairy land. They represent one passion of our nature as the all-absorbing concern of life. And, by allowing the gay, artful, profligate, and unprincipled to succeed in their stratagems, they awaken a sympathy with fashionable guilt, and

make virtue a mean, undesirable object. I do not say there are no exceptions to this statement. But I do and must contend, that the effect of an indiscriminate perusal of such works is to diminish our dread of vice and crime, to corrupt our purest sentiments, to make real life seem dull and tame, and to enhance thereby the evils and dangers necessarily attendant on youth.

And that we in this country are peculiarly exposed to the influence of pernicious books of this class is obvious, not only from our own observation, but from the testimony of that Nation which produces the majority of these works. "The sale of inferior English books in the United States," says a late writer in the London Athenæum, "is prodigious. Every thing in the way of narrative, which could find a publisher in England, is reprinted in New York; and where fifty copies are sold in England, thousands of the transatlantic edition are bought up with avidity." What a startling fact is this! Beware, Young Man, that you, as an individual American, give not occasion for the censure it involves.

But do we in thus saying discountenance in our younger friends the habit of reading? Certainly not. While the perusal of the light and ordinary novel, the corrupting poem, and the vulgar and obscene play, are fraught with inconceivable harm, an acquaintance with the best

literary productions affords a great safeguard to our principles and characters. Books are often our wisest teachers ; and in a valuable book there is always one advantage over every other means of improvement. Good companions, faithful instructors, the Pulpit, the Lyceum, furnish us but occasional benefits. Not so the instructive volume. That may be with us to enlighten and animate every hour we can give to intellectual pursuits. We can be sure of filling even a few moments of leisure, whenever they occur, pleasantly and usefully if we have a good book at hand. The habit of so spending those fragments of time, that many not seldom waste from day to day, would be of invaluable service. It would gratify that love of excitement so natural to youth. It would keep their feet from the haunts of the idle and vicious ; and supply them with a change of amusements of a worthy, and to a cultivated mind, a most acceptable description.

May the Young Men of this Nation be given to much reading. May there be none whose taste shall be such as to lead them to prefer scenes that endanger their good principles and good name, before the enjoyments of a happy home and an interesting book. Thus situated, their virtue will be safe. So employed they are gaining a knowledge second only in value to experience itself.

Do not, I beseech you, put in here that mis-

taken plea, the want of time. Before you do this, ask yourself soberly, "could I not, if I heartily desired it, redeem even hours from every day of my life for reading, which I now devote to morning slumbers, to frivolous conversation, to pernicious amusements and indulgences, or to profitless reveries?" Imitate that great economist of time, who by this habit was enabled so to cultivate his intellect, that he rose from being a poor printer's boy to a seat in our Federal Convention. He denied himself many a protracted meal rather than lose time from a favorite study. Be as frugal of your minutes as of your dollars, and your great hindrance to reading will soon vanish.

And bestow much care on the selection of your books. Ask the advice of a judicious friend, and do not so much as take a Newspaper, without some reference to the effect it will have on your moral and mental improvement. Read History; it conduces much to these objects by presenting, in the fortunes of Nations, and of the eminent individuals who have governed, under Providence, their destinies, a guide to the means of virtue and prosperity. Biography serves the same purpose in a still higher degree. The details of actual life interest all men beyond most other species of reading. Hence if we would raise up Alfreds, Howards, Franklins, Oberlins, to bless the world, we must present our young men, not

with a dry abstract of the principles which form such characters, but with a portrait of those living and glowing spirits themselves. And a single forcible delineation of the traits of a Nero, or an Arnold, will do more to save us from a repetition of their vices, than a volume of mere warnings and philippics on that subject.

Well chosen works of taste and imagination exert a good influence on the mind and heart. Treatises on moral and intellectual philosophy, on natural history and science, on physiology,—an invaluable study as connected with a young man's health, purity, and virtue,—all these, and as many more subjects as can be pursued consistently with your daily employment, claim your attention. Read, in short, to acquire useful information, to cherish good principles and pure affections, to prepare yourself for usefulness in this life, and for a happy existence in that which is to come. Attend closely to what you read, and reflect upon it afterward. These simple rules will save you from the moral danger of bad books, and make your reading all tend to improvement.

We have spoken of the imagination as a source of moral exposure. In our youthful days the Passions likewise are strong. We are easily excited, and the warmth of our feelings betrays us often into error. There is now much to be feared from an uncontrolled temper. Inexperi-



ence of its evils makes youth less cautious than age on this point. Yet what inconceivable dangers attend the indulgence of anger. Not only character, but even life itself sometimes depends on our power of ruling our passions. How often in the annals of homicide do we observe the victims of this sin, men whose whole subsequent life has been embittered by a single blow struck in anger.

There is doubtless a difference in native temperament; some find it a comparatively light task to govern their irritable feelings. But if we commenced the work in childhood and youth, none of us would prove wholly unable to rule our spirits. Let the Young Man, as he regards the happiness of his home and his friends, as he values a fair fame in the world, and by his every prospect of moral security, restrain his temper. It should be his daily endeavour to be mild and gentle. Is he reproached and menaced? Let him return "a soft answer, and the wrath shall be turned away." Collect the thoughts; let the voice be subdued; do not so much as raise the hand, if you find a temptation approaching. Calmness is always a dignified and magnanimous quality. It will command respect and influence, where even genius itself, when fitful and impassioned, shall fail of this homage.

Another danger of youth proceeds from an undue Self-confidence. The feelings are then

ardent, and prompt us to precipitate action. We incline to follow much the impulse of the moment ; to press on before plans are matured, or consequences foreseen. " Young men," said Lord Bacon, " in the conduct and management of actions, embrace more than they can hold ; stir more than they can quiet ; fly to the end without consideration of the means and degrees ; and pursue some few principles which they have merely chanced upon." Now, whence do these errors proceed ? Often from an improper reliance upon self. When we leave the harbour, all seems well. The sun shines brightly, and the waters are smooth. The experienced mariner tells us there are shoals, rocks, quicksands, and breakers, nights of darkness, and mountain waves whose terrors he has felt, and of which we must beware. But the counsel appears to us idle. " So clear a sky is before us, and such calm waters," we say to him, " it cannot be that danger is nigh. We can see and judge for ourselves ; it is not, and it will not be with us as you predict." In these few words lies hidden that fallacious reasoning which has ruined many a young man.

If it be true of all ages, it is particularly so of this, " that the way of every man seemeth right in his own eyes." Caution, prudence, forecast, those prime virtues, without which wisdom becomes folly, and courage is but rashness, are to many of the young, but old men's whims.

The suggestions they present are regarded as the offspring of a love of authority, or at best, of an entire indifference to the happiness of those less advanced than themselves. Among the dispositions most extensively prevalent in youth is a false independence, a passion for unrestrained liberty, an idea that it is better to go somewhat wrong, than to go right by the advice of others. Yet what a wide space there is between a reasonable docility, and a timid, infant-like dependence on others. Can we not possess adamantine firmness in good purposes, and where from reflection we perceive ourselves right, and still be occasionally influenced by those wiser than ourselves? I admire, I honor, and esteem above all price a calm independence of character. But I must think that he who, rather than hearken to his friends, places himself day after day in situations that peril his virtue, has a false independence, that spirit which brought Milton's hero from glory to shame and woe. "It is wise," said an heathen, "to be taught even by an enemy." What then are his prospects who sets at nought the counsels of his *friends*? who thinks it a stain on his pride to follow the judgment of another, rather than his own?

There is a danger closely connected with the one just named, of which the Young Man should be fully aware. I refer to Indolence. He, who trusts unduly in himself, is likely to

make few resolute and persevering exertions. He can accomplish his day's work, he tells us, sooner by hours than his neighbour, and why should he not take those hours to himself, in morning slumbers, in loitering at an hotel, or in the charms of the gaming-house?

Others are indolent from the belief that idleness and ease constitute Happiness. They look on the retired merchant perhaps with envy, and suppose that to ride in his coach, and have servants and luxuries in abundance, to be tied to no business, but pass the whole day in enjoying himself, this must be perfect bliss. Such young men cannot be too soon undeceived. They should know that it is labor which makes recreation pleasant, and that industry alone can save us from the miseries of ennui. Consider, you who would doze away life, and be drones in society, that you not only defraud by this course your friends and the world of those beneficent offices which labor alone can discharge; but you will ere long sink into vices, the sure attendants of indolence. Who are the patrons of the card-table, the billiard-room, the licensed and unlicensed grocery? Who are our spend-thrifts and vagabonds? Be idle, and vice will surely give you business; and you will impair your health, and at length become weary of existence itself. Activity, the constant pursuit of a better condition and an higher good, is the demand of our nature; and woe to him, who,

by any habits or practices, so stupifies his faculties as to become dead to her calls.

In treating of the moral evils that beset the young men of our country, a fearful preëminence must be given to the passion for Gain. We are called "a money-making people;" and the description is a just one. For there is no trait in our character, certainly in that of the inhabitants of New England, so conspicuous as the spirit of adventure and of traffic. It possesses the minds of our children. The very school-boy will part with almost his needful apparel for the sake of a good bargain; and he is taught the love of money by the little box now given him to hoard up each cent. Our young men are fired with a thirst to commence business prematurely, that they may enter those paths which lead to the boundless accumulation of property. Too often are their parents and guardians anxious only to educate them for artful competitors and shrewd traders, if not for mere speculators. The noble desire for moral excellence is sometimes wholly merged in this sordid disposition. They are taught that man's highest good lies in outward things. Who can be surprised, if beneath such training, many should make shipwreck of their integrity, virtue and truth?

I would by no means condemn the acquisition of property. When sought with good motives, that is, a desire of usefulness, and of procuring for ourselves and our families a competence of

worldly comforts ; and when obtained by honorable means, it is a most valuable possession. The wealth of this nation is one cause of its elevation and influence among the powers of the earth. And we would not, if we could, destroy the pecuniary enterprise of our younger class of citizens. But we would with a friendly voice bid them beware of the evils that hover round the path of those who " make haste to get rich." Are you absorbed in the love of gain ? Do you regard money as the main thing in your hopes, aims, and toils ? Does this feeling lead you to esteem poverty as the most awful of calamities ? Would you surrender any one of your principles rather than lose your property ? Do you believe that riches can fill and satisfy the immortal soul ? If you do, know that your disappointment is certain.

And this is the least of the evils that impend on your course. Vice, crime, all that accompanies an heart dead to purity and goodness, may soon reach, and defile, and lay waste your noblest energies. Think not that he, who quits his stated employment to launch on the stormy sea of speculation and measureless risks, can do it with impunity. He, to whom fair profits, reasonable gains, and a steady accumulation of property have become dull words, is on the brink of a fearful precipice. For in this state of mind the desire of wealth increases with its acquisition ; the profits of to-day seem wholly

unworthy of to-morrow ; and when the object cannot be obtained by honest means, then comes the awful crisis. The knee is bent to Mammon ; God is forgotten, if not despised ; credit stands fair for a season ; but the disclosure is at length made, — infatuation, fraud, forgery, — a crash is heard, and the moral edifice is in ruins.

While then you can, secure yourself, young man, against this destructive spirit. Commence business only when you can do it on your own resources, or with a clear prospect of remunerating your patron capitalist. Beware of that crying sin of our times, overtrade. Guard against an inordinate, ever-burning thirst for new projects. Embark only when your vessel is seaworthy ; and though an employer would initiate you in the smooth arts of falsehood, and tempt you to dishonest practices, and though a whole city would furnish precedents of the same conduct, say, as did the pure and bold son of Israel, on a different occasion, No ; “ how can I do this wickedness, and sin against God ” and conscience ? So will your gains be honest and laudable. You will fear to show no man your books. And should misfortunes ever overtake you, they will be met by the all-conquering energy of an unblemished soul.

But the chief exposure of young men proceeds from the society of Corrupt Companions.

The social feelings are usually at this age peculiarly strong. An earnest desire of companionship leads often to a hasty formation of intimacies. And yet the company then kept exerts an immense influence on the opinions, tastes, and habits. Man is, to a very great extent, the creature of imitation. He catches the tone of thought and conduct, and conforms to the manners of his associates. This is often an insensible process, but it goes forward as certainly as the hue of the chameleon changes with the object it touches. And if wise and good men do much to mould others to their likeness, so do the corrupt and unprincipled debase their companions. This makes it of primary concern to the young to know who are desirable associates, and with whom their virtue and happiness will always be endangered. For the want of this knowledge alone, the youth, who had shared the best of parental instructions, and enjoyed the privileges of a full education, moral, literary and religious, has been seen in the meridian of life, fallen from his early promise, besotted, disgraced and ruined. Let it then be clearly understood, that the company we choose and keep at the outset of life is likely to decide our character, and our fortune through life.

But what constitutes the danger from this source? It may be described, in its main features, as of a two-fold nature. First, there are



those who desire, and *determine by all means in their power to lead* in their circle, or, at least, to gain all possible influence over their favorite companions. But who does not perceive that this resolution puts their own virtue in peril? Not that a desire of influence is in itself to be condemned. It is, on the contrary, when connected with integrity, and unsullied pureness of principle, the spring of many noble and Christian exertions. But when the motive becomes wrong, when we aim at influence from a selfish love of power, and not as a means of doing good, it becomes decidedly criminal.

Suppose a young man resolved at all hazards to gain popularity with those of his age. He gives the conversation when with them at first a profitable turn, in the hope that this will accomplish his object. But he soon finds that his neighbour gains more favor than himself by giving to all subjects that come up, be they trifling or serious, the turn of wit. A jest he discovers is far more popular than an argument. He adopts this expedient himself; he makes it at length his uniform practice, to go beyond any one else in raillery, burlesque and ridicule. Do you doubt the effect of this habit on his own character? Virtue, to be possessed, must be revered. He who makes light of vice, who sports with honor, truth, justice or kindness, undermines those qualities in himself. He does not, he cannot rank them so highly as he

did before this offence. Religion demands to be revered. If you trifle with its laws and institutions, you cannot afterwards respect them as you ought. Jest with the precepts and ridicule the teachers of Christianity, or make a mock of the Sabbath, and if you still reverence religion and obey its requisitions, you will be the first on record who has pursued such a course with impunity.

Besides, the tendency of such habits is to gather round one a set of companions inferior to himself. This is the very point to which an unprincipled ambition directly leads. It wants those around it who will listen and follow. As a sure consequence of this, he who talks to gain popularity lets himself down to the level of his hearers. He aspires to be no better than they are ; his whole aim is to be as much like them as possible. And then, too, his fault, that of sporting with all subjects, instead of being in his sight a fault, is looked upon with self-satisfaction. It is the instrument of his gain, and that frees it from all disapprobation with him. Is there no danger in that man's path ? If circumstances, as we know, do almost every thing in deciding one's character, then he, whose situation is among those lower than himself, and whose chief delight is to be with those, who are in reality bearing him constantly downward, is far from being safe. Let him look well to the price he is paying for popu-

larity. Let him inquire, if the sense of having injured the good principles, and diminished the veneration for God and virtue, in this circle of associates, and of having degraded his own high sentiments to gain what he has, will not give him hereafter sorrow unto anguish.

The other branch of this exposure in youth is the counterpart to that already considered, the evil of *being easily enticed into error by corrupt companions*. Pythagoras, before admitting any one into his school, inquired, "who are their intimate friends?" And he did wisely; for those, who have long chosen and sought the society of the vicious, have usually become so themselves. Many begin to walk with such companions from timidity and diffidence. They chanced, it may be, at first to be with them. Through a fear of offending them, of being thought singular, or of being reputed pious, they applauded the vulgar jest, the obscene allusion and the profane word. They wanted courage to frown on what they felt to be wrong. By degrees it began to appear less heinous to themselves. And, at length, they could laugh as loud as the loudest at expressions, which, in the days of their purity, they regarded with horror.

It is singular to observe what arts are employed by one bent on misleading his associates. How closely he studies their characters, how he searches for their weak points, and re-

volves in what way he shall most surely decoy them to his snare. Has the subject of his stratagem a manly independence and boldness of spirit? He is told that much of what men call morality is a mere name, used by the timid and precise to rob us of our freedom of action, and make us slaves to an imaginary master. Religion is the contrivance of priestcraft; all piety is mere hypocrisy; and to allow superstition to rule your heart and life is to be the slave of folly. Is the victim marked for his prey, a modest, unassuming youth? He is approached by gentler means. A blush is first raised on his cheek by impure words. If he whisper a doubt, the laugh is upon him, and his virtue is put out of countenance. And to their shame be it said, that the corrupters of the young are so mean, so filled with the creeping, cowardly spirit of the serpent, that, like their great prototype, who tempted first the pure virtue of Eve, they select for their fell purpose the most modest young men they can find.

There is no point on which you need more, my young friends, to be strengthened, than on this. You may have read much and well on your coming duties, but there is a power in what you are likely to *hear*, in the language and manners of some among your companions, that will come upon you like the waters of the spring-melted river, with an accumulating energy, that nothing but the very firmest principles can effec-

tually withstand. And you will find no weapon so often and so skilfully used as ridicule. Argument, reasoning, they know is insufficient for their object. The sentiments they wish you to adopt, and the conduct they would entice you to pursue, cannot be sustained by reason. Sober judgment will never approve and justify them. Besides, they know you would at once oppose a fair and manly argument in favor of vice. You would then be fully on your guard ; and having reason, an unpolluted heart, and a sense of danger on your side, they would present an impenetrable armor against all such attacks. Equally hopeless would be the attempt to compel you into guilt. For the education you have hitherto enjoyed and but just completed, the voice of your friends and your Country, an unperturbed conscience, indeed, every good influence would be marshalled in a phalanx against the assaults of force. But ridicule, with its legion of allies, will steal upon you unawares. The company, the hour, the place, a thousand circumstances will favor its action ; and unless you heed now, now before the evil day comes on, our friendly counsel and kind warning, you will surely be vanquished.

Do I awaken a groundless alarm ? Let there be an appeal to your own observation. Have you never heard things you felt to be sacred treated with levity and derision ? Has your love of truth never been shocked in circles

where falsehood and calumny had ceased to be called sins? Have you never known sympathy and compassion, those heaven-born virtues, ridiculed as effeminate? Were you never present where your best advisers, perhaps the guardians of your helpless infancy were the theme of sport, and the names of father and mother, names which God has made holy to every unsullied youth, were held up to laughter? If you have not witnessed these scenes, happy for you. But none the less true is it, that in the crowded city especially, there are those who make it a business by these and kindred means to pollute and ruin the young men in their sphere.

Intemperance has filled its ranks again and again in every populous place by this method of enlistment. • Take a sober man. Begin with him by the sneer about joining the "cold-water society." Tell him he has no independence. Put wine to his lips. Strike up some Bacchanalian song; and how long will his Temperance abide the temptation? You might have reasoned with him interminably, and he would not have touched a drop of the poison. But in a single evening he was sneered out of soberness, and laughed into the drunkard's jollity. Intemperance, it is said, finds most of its victims among young men; for the appetites, like the passions, are at their age with difficulty controlled. If, then, this be one of the leading dangers before you; and if, as you cannot

doubt, sobriety, the due subjection of your physical man, be essential to all virtue, it becomes you to watch against all scenes that lead towards the excess of animal indulgences. Avoid, as one of these, bad company, that of the sensual, coarse and bantering. Do this, and you may hope to be a temperate man. Disregard this monition, join but occasionally the band of gay tavern-haunters, and you are already drawn within the outer circles of a vortex from which there is no escape. You are the captive of a vice, to whose unutterable evils the annals of humanity furnish no parallel.

Among the dangers incident to a talent for ridicule is the fact, that it is often connected with pleasing manners. Nothing more charms the young than a gaiety of spirit, a free air and bearing, united with great powers of conversation. Let a person of this description allure you to his society by plausible appearances, by taking an interest in you, by holding out tokens of friendship, and showing you small favors, you come almost insensibly to embrace his views, and join in his habits. We all need to have good motives placed frequently before us, and good examples in our sight, in order to maintain our virtue. Without such aid good inclinations would soon lose much of their power. But the individual now daily before us presents impure motives. He strikes away, one by one, the unseen props of our character. He is lessening

our respect for correct feelings and high considerations. And though our good principles had been strong as the rock, yet these continual waters will in time wear them away.

But not only do men of gentlemanly manners make successful corrupters of youth; the most vulgar and unlearned can, with the help of ridicule, attain the same end. It was once related of the prisoners of Newgate, that they spent their time in ridiculing all appearance of virtue in each other, and thus most effectually hardened one another in their guilt. The lowest, indeed, can in this way bring the highest and most deserving down to their own miserable reputation. Of many, who have no merits whatever to plead for themselves,

“Nor raise their thoughts beyond the earth they tread,  
E'en these can censure, those can dare deride  
A Bacon's avarice, or a Tully's pride.”

How often have illustrious characters been sullied, brought into suspicion, and finally ruined by this weapon. How many innocent lives have fallen before its desolating power. The very Son of God, he whose merits seemed to challenge the severest scrutiny, was apprehended by means of low and coarse allegations. And when Pilate would have released him, the multitude cried out, “crucify him, crucify him.” But one thing was then wanting to consummate the passions of the infuriated mob. It was enough to put on that despised head a mock crown,



place a mimic sceptre in his hand, and then raise the shout of ridicule, "Hail King of the Jews!"

This leads me to advert to one other use of this weapon, of which I wish you to be fully aware; for it demands of you a special preparation, to be successfully encountered. I refer to the scoffs of Infidelity. Where reason is employed, and sober, manly evidence is adduced, the friends of Christianity have no cause for fear. Its truths when fairly examined are found always to rest on a rock; to be eternal and irrefutable. But what truth is proof against the insinuating sneer? The moment religion is ridiculed, it is placed under an obvious disadvantage. For the mind is taken off from its great doctrines, its strong pillars, its intrinsic excellence, and fixed on secondary points. And the smaller the point is, the less connection it has with the broadest and best principles of Christianity, the more easy is the task to render it ludicrous. Hence, from the coarse fabricator of the "Infancy of Jesus," down through the sarcastic Voltaire, the insidious Gibbon, and the bantering, scurrilous Paine, to the organs of Infidelity in this age and country, the main spring of all their efforts has been ridicule. Every argument they adduce has been refuted again and again by Christian writers. But a scoff, who can refute?

Expect, then, if in your daily intercourse you

shall meet with the Infidel, not reasoning and evidence, but taunts and sneers. He will ridicule your minister. He will sport with the Bible. He will trifle with all you think sacred. Be not surprised at this ; receive it as a matter of course. If you will but anticipate and prepare for it, it will pass over your faith as harmlessly as the summer breeze does over the deep-rooted oak ; it may ruffle the foliage, but it cannot stir the trunk.

As you look forward to the perils that await you, set to your account, that among those arising from outward circumstances, there is none so fraught with destruction, none against which you are so unweariedly to watch, as against the ridicule of unprincipled companions. And, on the other hand, seek, as a moral panoply, the society of the good of your age. Do not venture among the vicious under the specious expectation of raising them to a level with yourself. For though you now abhor their sin, you may be led, ere you perceive the change, "first to endure, then pity, then embrace it." Select for your intimate companions those whose education has been good, those who have virtuous relatives, and who, themselves, possess an unimpeachable character. The touch of the ermine cannot pollute you. And if you possess pure traits yourself, you will hold an elevated rank, and be admitted and welcomed to the best circles of society.

Young men of America, consider with what privileges you are now entrusted. What a precious birthright are these means of moral and intellectual improvement ! Will you be faithful to your charge ? The eyes of a cloud of friendly witnesses are upon you. Their hearts leap at the thought of your glorious opportunities. Virtue, wisdom and learning, cherish the brightest anticipations when they contemplate your ranks. But there are other eyes, evil, malicious eyes, turned also towards you. The country is stained by haunts of iniquity, plague-spots on the scroll of her fame. The Gaming-table is spread in the retreats of darkness ; and for whom is it spread ? For *Young Men*. There are vultures looking out from those scenes toward you for their prey. The light of day is shut out from them. They are called " houses of refreshment." External appearances indicate nothing of the fiend-like practices within. The pure sun of heaven, one may almost think, would blast their foul forms, were it suffered to penetrate there. There are houses of Licentiousness in the secluded alleys and courts of our cities. To whom is the voice of their panders addressed ? To *Young Men*. They whisper, they allure ; they spare no arts to entice the unwary. Beware of their serpent charms. Offend once, gratify even a curiosity to visit those abodes of guilt, and you take what was always the first step, with the long list of youths who have there ventured and

there lost their undying souls. It is night. Yon building is illuminated. Preparations are there making for an exhibition of sights and sounds that can transform earth to an Elysium. Intemperance has there set her snares. The sylphlike votaries of lewdness wait round the door-posts. For whom are the snares set? And where are the victims for which those monsters lie now in ambush? Let the *Young Men*, who bend their steps thither, reply. And let those, as yet blushing in their youthful purity, understand that to them is a call there made. And will they answer it? Will they go at the summons? If, my young reader, you are destined to be taken in those toils, bear me witness that one warning voice was raised ere you went down to your untimely fate. Heaven avert their success, and give you an auspicious rescue from these manifold perils.

Carry a sleepless vigilance into all the situations in which you may hereafter be placed. Remember there is a temptation in every walk, and at every hour of your life. And though it should not always be seen, be not so deluded as to believe that no danger exists. You may say, in the fulness of self-confidence, "I shall never be moved; my mountain shall stand forever." But know that your deadliest foes exult at this language. They want only that you should be satisfied with yourself, and certain you are safe. Will you venture into the hottest of the battle,

because some have passed unhurt amid balls and bayonets? Are you stronger than the thousands, who have perished, because they dared to tread the ground you now fearlessly contemplate? If you think little is at stake; that to lose honor, virtue, salvation, is about as well as to win them, then go in your pride to the scenes where self is no longer respected, and where shame is an unknown word. But no, my young friends, I am persuaded better things than these are in your minds and hearts. I believe you have already, with that invincible love of the right and the good which fills the soul of every true man, resolved to gird on the whole armor of defence.

If I thought one more motive needful as a safeguard to your future course, I would point you to the kindling example of one who, while yet a Young Man, meditated on the temptations that hung round the path before him. He saw, in the picture, that his Personal Wants, the lack of bread to eat, would tempt him to be false to his duty and his God. But he determined to resist the enticement; for he felt that he was not to "live by bread alone," but by keeping the words of the Divinity within him. He saw that the Love of Display would tempt him to pervert his noble powers, and make himself a spectacle to the weak and the wondering. The snare did not take him. He would not tempt his Maker by abusing his gifts. Next

came Ambition, the passion for office and dominion, and the glory which attends them,— a fearful temptation, and how many has it mastered, — “Get thee hence, Satan:” was his indignant reply, “for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.” So may you say. And may you keep every good resolution as he did. Foresee your danger; arm against it; trust in God, and you have nothing to fear.

## CHAPTER IV.

### DOMESTIC DUTIES.

A Young Man's Influence on the Reputation of his Kindred — Obligations to his Parents' Family — Claims of Parents — Story from Heron — Widow's Sons — Madison — Extract from Irving — Disinterestedness of Parents — Happiness Sons may give them — Misery occasion them — Anecdote of a Sailor — Gaming a Nucleus of the Vices — Conversation with a Young Man — Brothers and Sisters — Love of Home — Marshall — Washington.

THERE is no object in which the welfare of man, his virtue, and happiness are so intimately involved as in his domestic connections. The Family is a divine institution, and by the act of establishing it, Providence has distinctly taught, that he who fulfils its demands with fidelity, shall enjoy the highest measure of all that is truly to be desired on earth ; and, if faithful to God, no secondary station in the kingdom of Heaven. The prevalence of religion is connected with the success of this institution. Morality, and the order and well-being of the Civil

Community depend closely on the general extension of the fireside virtues. But this opens too wide a field for our present survey. There is still another view of this subject, that which regards the mutual interest which the members of one family have in the characters of each other. It is incontestably true, that in this respect we are all daily exerting an influence for evil or for good, of paramount importance. Let us sustain whatsoever relations we may among a circle of kindred, there is an indissoluble bond of sympathy between us and them. Their honor, and their peace and joy, are bound up in the dispositions we possess, and in our conduct not only towards them, but every where, in all situations, and on all occasions.

It is the purpose of the remarks that follow, to illustrate this truth, to show *in what manner the qualities of a Young Man affect the hopes, the reputation, and the entire prosperity of his kindred and home.*

Let us look first at the influence such an one exerts on the Character and Happiness of his Parents' Family. God has implanted in the soul a regard for human estimation, which, when duly restrained and rightly directed, is a laudable motive of action. This position is supported by the Scriptures. They speak of a good name as more precious than rubies; and as an incentive to virtuous deeds, they affirm that the righteous shall be had in everlasting



remembrance. But without virtue we cannot secure the approbation of others. It is real merit alone to which the world universally accord the meed which that alone deserves. And if a well-earned reputation be thus important to individuals, it is no less so to Families. They have a character at stake ; and so inseparably are all that compose the same household united in this respect, that the vices of a single member often bring discredit on the whole, and the excellence of one redounds to the praise of all.

Nothing, we know, is more common than when a son has committed some flagrant offence, to infer, before an acquaintance with his connections, that they are somewhat like himself. The parents, it is forthwith argued, must have neglected his education, or set him a pernicious example. And his brothers, — the circumstances of the case being wholly unknown, — are brought into suspicion by his misdemeanour. This is especially true of the *young* transgressor. Having completed the term of his childhood's discipline, and recently left his home, he now bears, we naturally conclude, the impression there given him. There has not been time for a new set of habits to be formed ; and it can hardly be that a wrong impulse was not given him by that circle of relatives. I do not say that such opinions are always just. We ought, undoubtedly, to know the whole case before passing this grave censure. But so men

in general do not. And every young man must act by taking the world as it is, not as it should be. Who, then, will consent, in the very morning of his life, to cast a blot on the scene of his birth? If you are willing to sacrifice your own reputation, to degrade yourself to a level with the offscouring of society, for the sake of your family be entreated to forbear. When you think that others, the kind, the pure and the good, your dearest friends, must sink in some measure with yourself, it will stay your hand, I am sure, from evil. In the dignity of a disinterested virtue you will say to the tempter, "how can I do this wickedness against the honor, and to the disgrace of that spot which conscience, principle and nature bid me hold sacred?"

Consider, again, the opportunity afforded your age of promoting in unnumbered ways the Improvement, and the immediate Happiness of your nearest connections. If God have furnished you with outward means, — and, indeed, it requires little more than the disposition, — how easily may you contribute to the temporal enjoyment of that circle. The smallest gift may do them much good. It will certainly strengthen your own benevolent affections, and bind those who should be so bound and affected, in a tender regard for you. How much more to be commended is he, who devotes a portion of his first earnings to this object, than he, who

bestows all he can gain upon selfish, if not absolutely corrupting indulgences.

What a beautiful scene, too, is that, in which the Son and the Brother returns from the toils of the day, with a cheerful step to his father's fireside, there to edify, by alternately useful conversation and instructive reading, the quiet, happy listeners around him :—

“ Eve following eve,  
Dear tranquil time, when the sweet sense of home  
Is sweetest.”

But, to descend to the requirements of a particular domestic relation, let us contemplate the obligations of a young man to his Parents. There is something in the filial bond peculiarly near and affecting. It awakens sentiments deeper and more enduring than any other upon earth. It connects us with the authors of our being, the guardians of our infant helplessness, the guides of our childhood, and the instructors of our youth ; with those whose affection for us is but faintly shadowed forth in any other relation however intimate and lasting. Theirs is a love that rejoices in our virtue and success, weeps for our misfortunes, and cannot be alienated even by our guilt and dishonor. How many sleepless hours, and with what unequalled anxiety, did the mother that bore us watch over our endearing weakness. Before we could conceive of the strength of her love, of her unwearied care, her generous, measureless sacri-

fices for our comfort, what a debt did we already owe her! In our early childhood, she first taught us of the Being from whose hand we came. To her mild voice we responded, — but half conscious of the glorious realities dawning on our soul, — “My Father in Heaven.” If we are now walking upward and onward in that blessed course marked out by her spirit, doubtless to her is the praise due. And though we be lost in worldliness and sin, yet the germ she then planted may yet spring up, and bear fruit to immortality. And up to our manhood, what delight has it given her to render us a series of uncounted services, from the supply of our necessities, down to the humblest effort that would contribute to our happiness.

“I have met with a hard fortune in this world,” said a young man in conversation with me; “there have been times when I felt as if I had not a friend upon earth. But I would think of *my mother*, and my heart was cheered. For I could always go home and pour out my troubles into her bosom, and she would listen and sympathize with me, and give me good advice, and inspire me with courage to try again, and to bear whatever disappointments might afterwards come upon me.” I was touched by his language, and it suggested what I cannot forbear to introduce here, that beautiful picture of a true mother drawn by an accomplished countryman of our own. “Oh!

there is an enduring tenderness in the love of a mother to a son, that transcends all other affections of the heart. It is neither to be chilled by selfishness, nor daunted by danger, nor weakened by worthlessness, nor stifled by ingratitude. She will sacrifice every comfort to his convenience; she will glory in his fame, and exult in his prosperity. And if adversity overtake him, he will be the dearer to her by misfortune; and if disgrace settle upon his name, she will still love and cherish him, and if all the world beside cast him off, she will be all the world to him." What will make good sons, if not language like this?

And the good father, what has he not felt and done for his children. From that dependant period when the eye first beamed with affection, when the tongue lisped in unformed accents, and when the inward powers had but commenced their expansion, it was he, who shared in a mother's solicitude, and watchfulness, and devices for our infant gratification. To his toils we owe our very subsistence. From him we received counsel, encouragement, and kind admonitions in our youth. His was the bounty that gave us the means of our advancing moral and mental education, and prepared us for a future employment in the world.

To both parents a son is indebted beyond estimation. If he begin to enumerate their claims, to set faithfully in order their sacrifices

and sufferings, their labors and prayers on his behalf, he cannot proceed far before despairing of his object. He is compelled to confess that their love for him has been surpassed only by that of the Great Spring of all mercies, by His, whom to represent in the strongest possible language our deep obligations to Him, we term our "Father in Heaven.

Is there in the wide world a true son, that does not say, in view of these facts, "What return can I make for these services? How can I repay the kindness of my parents? I feel that, if the way were but pointed out to me, there is nothing I would not perform, or endure to requite these unwearied benefactors." If, my young friends, you entertain these feelings, your first care will be to *Reverence* your parents. Have they done so much for you? Can you not find the limit of their services? Then surely the day should never come when you will cease to respect them.

It is said that we live in an age marked by a want of veneration; that old institutions, however sacred, are fearlessly and often wantonly assailed; that the aged are not treated with the deference that is due them; and that children generally are even beginning to treat father and mother with rudeness. What a picture does this give us of the signs of the times! Is the allegation a just one? Can it be that parents are doomed, not only to be deprived of that high

reverence which their relation and offices so loudly claim, but to receive absolute disrespect, a coarse incivility in some instances, from those, over whom they have toiled and wept and prayed, in the hope of fair fruits in the future ; in the hope at least of preserving that sensibility to virtue, to merit and gratitude, which is indispensable to the honor of our nature ? Let us charitably believe that the accusation is not in general well grounded. And let me exhort and beseech all my young readers, that they give no occasion for this charge. May you all, whatever else you may feel warranted in ceasing to respect, never look upon your Parents with other than a becoming reverence.

But it may be inquired whether all parents deserve this veneration. Say some children, " I am much superior to my father and mother, and why should I pay them this deference ? Were they as well educated as myself, did they appear as well in society, and especially were they not in destitute circumstances, it would be right to require me to respect them. But,"—My friend, pause. Do not, for such reasons, I entreat you, withhold that tribute which God, nature, and humanity demand of you. Because our parents are poor, shall we feel no obligations to love and venerate them ? It is not then merit, the claims of the relation and of justice we are called to regard, but riches, handsome apparel, splendid furniture, a fine house, a showy equipage ! God

forbid that we cherish this disgraceful pride, that we be guilty of this base ingratitude. If our father was in straitened circumstances, and still did all that he has done, all that he could do for us, we owe him, instead of less regard, an hundred fold the more. If our mother, with scanty means, could promote our comfort, and train us up as she did, then, for the sake of reason, of right, of common compassion, let us not despise her in her need.

The son pleads, perhaps, that his parents were not educated so well as himself, that they have less knowledge, that their language is sometimes improper, and that they are not perfectly refined, and hence he is not bound to respect them. What must be the condition of that child's heart, who can forget all the virtues, all the solid acquisitions of a parent, made by his own personal efforts, and therefore of the very best description, and all his kindnesses to himself, because he wants certain outward accomplishments; or does not understand perchance Grammar, Rhetoric, or Philosophy! Is it nothing that, in addition to his other favors to that son, he actually furnished him the means of this superior education, that education by reason of which he became too learned to respect his Parents? "What has he that he did not receive? Why then is he puffed up, as though he had not received it?" The young man, who understands and feels at all the filial



obligations, will silence such emotions. The want of advantages, and of a finished education in their early days, is the very last excuse he will offer for neglecting to venerate a deserving father or mother.

And even in the case where the parent has obvious faults, the filial sentiment forbids the withholding of that respect, which the relation itself always demands. A child that is true to his duty, instead of magnifying such defects, will strive to palliate, to overlook, to forgive them. All men are imperfect, and common charity requires us to rejoice in opportunities to excuse their errors. How much more then do we owe this indulgence to our nearest earthly relatives, to those who, whatever be their deficiencies even towards ourselves, have still laid on us a weight of obligations we can never remove. However, then, young man, your parent may fail in his character, be not you remiss in your duty towards him. Should it prove that misfortune, or old age, or sickness has rendered him irritable, and made him offensive to others; or that he has not done all he might have done for you, or even that vice has sullied his reputation, do not you neglect and forsake him. Let no circumstance compel you to forget, that nature bids you be still respectful, considerate, and kind towards both your parents.

Were not the facts on record, one could not believe that a son would ever cease entirely to

regard his parents with tenderness and respect. And yet there have been those, such monsters in human form as to prove faithless and cruel to the guardians of their life. Heron, in his *Tales*, tells us of an unnatural son, who fed his aged father upon orts and offal, lodged him in a garret, and clothed him in sackcloth, while he and his wife and children lived in luxury. It is added, that he once bought sackcloth enough for two dresses for his father. The children took away the part not made up and hid it. On being asked by their father why they did this, they told him "they meant to keep it for *him*, when he should be old and walk with a stick." And if God had left that wretch, in his aged helplessness, to poverty, and to the abuse of those who were bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh, who could have challenged his justice? Let us beware of so awful a retribution. Let us sooner part with a portion of our daily bread than leave our parents to want. Let us love and befriend them, however great our success in accumulating property, or rising in station and honor, and however superior our education and attainments. We can never be raised so high in the world as to atone for disrespect, or for negligence and forgetfulness toward them.

An exalted trait in the character of Jesus, was his devotion to his Parents. They were of obscure reputation, for he was taunted as "the son of a carpenter." They had neither wealth,

nor distinction. And yet Jesus loved them. He was regardful of them from his earliest to his latest moment. He wrought a miracle at Cana by the request of his mother. And in the last hour of his life, neither the salvation of a world, nor his own cruel sufferings, could banish that mother from his thoughts. What counsel so becomes your age, as that you should imitate his holy example. The Son of God thought not himself degraded by owning and providing for his parent. Can we be ever, or by any circumstances, estranged from our parents? No, in their honor or dishonor, in their wealth or poverty, in their weakness, age, sickness, and to their death, by our utmost devotedness we can discharge a small part only of the great debt which we owe them. Be faithful, I entreat you, in this work.

Look next at *the strongest desire of Parents respecting their children*. What return does the true mother ask of her sons for all her privations, and efforts to advance their happiness? She has no higher wish than to see them promoting their own welfare. There is nothing in the parental heart so truly divine as this, that after years of care and watchfulness; after depriving themselves of ease and rest by night, and of the pleasures of the social visit, the Sabbath service, the noon-day walk, indeed, often of the very comforts of life, for the sake of their children, they can forgive the whole debt to

themselves, and desire only to witness virtue, piety, an honorable and Christian character in their offspring. To see the great aim of their labors successful, a kind disposition, industrious habits, fidelity to home, to society, to country, a generous zeal; a true humanity, benevolence crowned by a fervent devotion, amid the bloom of their youth, imparts a joy which no language can describe. The parent, as he contemplates this cluster of virtues, feels a sweet sense of relief from all the anxieties that these objects of his strongest affection once caused him. He can look forward with serenity; for he sees the promise of growing excellence and usefulness in those, for whom and in whom he lives. As he reflects on this prospect, his sons coming in succession to merit and honor, with no blight on their character; welcomed every where by the good; bearing success with meekness, and reverses with a dignified patience, respected by all, and loved by those who have shared their friendship; trusting then in his God, and favored thus manifestly by Him, he can say with unmingled sincerity, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen the salvation" of those dear to me as life.

There is one situation in which a young man is sometimes left, that calls for peculiar offices, and affords an opportunity for a domestic virtue of unequalled beauty. When the father of a

family has been removed by death, new obligations are imposed on the sons. It is no ordinary praise to discharge the dues that belong to a widowed mother. And the world accords its approbation to those, who thus, in some good measure, repair one of the most desolating bereavements of Providence, that of a mother left to educate, with unshared anxieties, a circle of fatherless children. They are called not only to train up themselves as their deceased parent would have done, but as far as possible, to fill his station towards her who survives. How much may they accomplish toward soothing her lonely spirit, by extending to her their arm in the trying exigencies of her lot, and striving to outvie one another in acts of delicate attention.

There is no higher eulogium on record of that eminent statesman, James Madison, than that contained in the fact, that he was distinguished for a filial piety, whose amiable offices were prolonged to the ninety-seventh year of his venerable mother, and were amply repaid by her repeated declaration, that "he had never given her cause for regret."

The eldest of a band of orphan brothers stands in the very place, as it were, of him who is now no more. What a high responsibility is resting upon him. There is nothing more affecting in the whole series of our Saviour's benevolent miracles, than his raising from the dead a young man, who was the only son of his mother, and

she a widow. A sorrow to anguish had come upon her. The sole earthly stay of her heart had been stricken from her side. A youthful and devoted son, one to whose care she had committed the sad remnant of her days, had been cut down in the morning of her hopes. What a thrill of joy must she have felt; how inconceivable to all, save a parent, must have been her sensations, when that son stood before her, a reanimated form. I can ask no higher blessing, my young reader, for you, than that if God, in his wisdom shall see fit to leave you to be the object of such widowed love, you may be found so distinguished for your early excellence, as to be leaned upon by that desolated heart with the fulness of a mother's trust.

Need I strengthen your conviction of the happiness you may give to a parent? Let us reverse the picture just presented. What must it be to have a *vicious son*? There are those doomed to experience this bitter fate. The son, instead of being a comfort and support, is, in those instances, an intolerable burden to his parents. When the great crisis of character arrived, they saw in him indications of a perverted moral taste, and a love of corrupting society. But they hoped he would still reform. That hope is blasted. If it be "sharper than a serpent's sting to have a thankless son,"—and there are few sins so dark as filial ingratitude,—what must it be to have one whom we nurtured and

trained up for a pure and deserving character, prove, after all our toils and hopes, a public disgrace to himself and his family. "That young man," said a sea captain, as he pointed to a rough, weather-beaten sailor climbing the shrouds, "was a few years ago a student in College. His father had immense wealth, and spared no pains to educate and gratify his son. But he lost his property; the son became dissipated, and has fallen to the condition in which you there see him. And he appears now to be actually beyond feeling." Of how many is this, or something similar, the history. How many kind homes have been forever forsaken, and how many parental bosoms incurably wounded, by the temptations of the rolling ocean.

But there is a pang even more piercing to the parent's heart than this. It is to have a son remain on the shore, perhaps in the very place of his birth, a profligate, ruined youth. What a scene is often presented, when, in the depths of midnight, the father must rise and open his door to an own child returned, it may be, from an house of ill fame, a brutal sensualist; returned, it may be, reeling and maddened from one of those foul buildings, where games of chance are played, buildings fitly termed "hells." For if there be such a place in the universe, it is found in a Gambling house. In most other situations the vices may come singly, but here they cannot. If your son become a confirmed gamester,

you cannot even hope that he will stop there. He will pollute his lips by foul oaths. He will dishonor his person by licentiousness. He will drink to infatuation. His mind will be fearfully intoxicated. He will neglect, of course, his business ; and your property must go, like dust, to sustain him in his ungodly career. And his character, what will he care for that ; how can it survive ? The passion for gaming gains more and more on its victim. If he lose, he is determined to recover. If he win, he burns for new prizes. And when a frantic joy has been again and again succeeded by agonizing disappointments, you may well fear the awful tidings, that in misery and despair, he has by his own hand rushed to the bar of that God he disbelieved in, or else defied as he went.

Young man, will you ever be seen where sin and death will so surely and perpetually haunt you ? "No," I hear your ingenuous and filial spirit reply, "till I die my feet shall never tend to such scenes. If I cared nothing for myself in this world or the next, the image of those revered Parents would attend me, and smite me to the earth, should I enter the dwellings of such wickedness."

The limits of my plan permit me to speak, in this connexion, of but one other domestic relation. I refer to the *Fraternal* tie. The young man, whom Providence has blessed with the inestimable gift of a sister, cannot easily meet the



claims thus laid upon him. There is something peculiarly sacred in the affection between brothers and sisters. It arises from their common origin, from their having been fostered, and guarded, and watched over by the same fond eyes back to days lost in the oblivion of infancy. This connexion gives scope for many disinterested and delicate offices. And it is truly a delightful spectacle to see a brother studiously attentive to a sister's wants ; to mark that her society is pleasant to him, that he prefers it in public to that of the gay and giddy ; to observe that he seems never so happy as when, either in the retirement of home, or while abroad and surrounded by the attractive of her sex, he can bestow some small act of kindness upon her.

And how mournful, on the other hand, are alienations and discord between those, who are called by every consideration to respect and love one another. If a brother neglect, or still worse, treat with unkindness and tyrannize over a defenceless sister ; what can we judge, but that he is a hard-hearted monster ? From such deportment in early life, what can we anticipate but selfishness, profligacy, and all manner of vice in subsequent years ? Many a Lady has declined the attentions of a young man because he was known to be regardless of his fraternal duties. And they did wisely ; for he, who can abuse a sister, will certainly lord it over a wife.

Were I to advise a young man with a single

reference to his success in the world, I should say, never be rude towards a sister. Never imagine it of little or no consequence how you treat her. If affection do not teach you otherwise, duty, the relation itself should. Besides, "the birds of the air" sometimes reveal family secrets. And if you are unfaithful in these duties at home, expect to hear of it in public; and make up your mind that, when you resolve to be a false and negligent brother, you will consent to sacrifice your whole reputation. Be assured, on the other hand, that fidelity in this relation will be a passport in society. It will be your best recommendation in many a circle.

Remember, also, the strength of affection in this sex, and how deep is the love of a sister. Your influence over their character may hence be almost unlimited. Be therefore disinterested, intimate and confidential in this relation. Give them advice in regard to their companions and friendships. Take an interest in the society they frequent, in which they meet the other sex. Many an unhappy acquaintance, and I will add, many improper marriages can be prevented by the kind offices of a brother. Aid your sisters in their studies, the formation of their manners and their entire character. If they are ever absent from home, correspond with them, and still act the part of a near friend. These habits will attach you more and more strongly to home, and while you bless

them, you will thus be saved from those baneful influences to which young men are exposed, who are never contented and happy at their own fireside.

And when you add to this, that you will thus not only promote the happiness of those immediately concerned, but give your parents an unspeakable joy, and establish a foundation for your own inward and permanent peace, you will perform the offices of a good brother cheerfully, I am confident, and with unremitted attention.

The last topic, to be urged on your thoughts in this place, is the importance of a *Love of Home*. There is some one passion predominant in the heart of every young man. There is a stronger interest in some scenes, and attachment to certain situations and pursuits, than to any and all others. Here you may see, in the very outset of life, a passion for Gain towering above every thing else; so that ease, even the necessary rest of night, time, talents, and not seldom reputation itself, are sacrificed on the altar of Mammon. He, who feels this burning desire to get rich, cares usually but little for the pleasures of home. He is never, indeed, so uneasy as when seated by his own fireside; for he feels, while conversing with his kindred, that he is making no money. And as for fireside reading, there is to him no interest in that; "he reads no book but his ledger."

There is a son of Ambition. His youthful spirit is kindled by nothing but preferment, office and distinction; and a more corroding, selfish disposition than this, does not exist. What is there in the career he is running, congenial with domestic quiet? He is agitated continually by the most restless and unsocial passions. Does he rise in office? He is jealous of rivals, anxious to please all, unsatisfied with the station he now holds, and panting ever for the future, that he may gain new triumphs. Does he fail of success? The mortification of defeat, the pain of disappointment, and envy of the successful competitor consume his peace. What are the calm joys of home, to one tost on these fiery billows? "An anxiety to be admired is," in the words of another, "a loveless passion, ever strongest toward those by whom we are least known and least cared for; loud at Elections, gay in the Ball-room, but mute and sullen at the Family fireside."

Are these, or other like traits, such as you, my young readers, extol, and place uppermost in your hearts? I cannot believe that they are. You must feel, in all moments of calm reflection, that it was not for sordid, selfish ends these immortal powers were given us. You cannot suppose that God meant wealth to be our supreme concern. It is not possible you should think that the breath of fame is our highest good. Nor can you give this rank to

animal indulgences, or to midnight mirth and convivial pleasures. No, you must feel that *virtue, purity, spiritual excellence* are the great purpose of our being.

And where can you acquire these qualities better than at home? He who gives his best earthly affections to the family circle, who thinks that some of his highest and most solemn duties are there, and who prizes the happiness of his kindred above every foreign object, must possess a good character. Look at the late eminent Chief Justice of this Nation, John Marshall. "After all," says that Eulogist who enjoyed his bosom confidence, "whatever may be his fame in the eyes of the world, that which in a just sense was his highest glory, was the purity, affectionateness, liberality and devotedness of his domestic life. Home, *home* was the scene of his real triumphs." And such were the triumphs of a greater than him. Who is not struck, in perusing the private correspondence of Washington, with his unquenchable attachment to his own quiet fireside? From the field of war, and from the harassing councils of a youthful Government, he is ever turning his thoughts homeward; and he seems never so truly happy, as when in the calm walks of his loved Mount Vernon. O that his serene countenance could now beam on the hearts of our young patriots, and infuse into them this portion of his rare spirit.

Let your native abode be the home of your affections, the scene in which your highest desires are centered, the dwelling of your best earthly happiness. Do this, and should your life be prolonged, you will be the hope and the stay of your kindred and home. And your character will then serve to elevate that of your family. Others may prove degenerate sons, and bring the gray hairs of their parents with sorrow to the grave. But you will be the pride of those revered spirits, and an honor to their names. You will establish their house, and perfect their best plans ; and your life will be a memorial to their praise.

The time will come, when you must part from those, who surrounded with you the same paternal hearth, and mingled in the light-hearted joys of childhood, and the opening promise of youth. New cares will attend your new situations ; and the relations you form, or the business you pursue may call you far from the play-place of your early days. In the unseen future, your brothers and sisters may be sundered from you by oceans or mountains. Your lives may be spent apart, and in death, space may divide you. Your remains may be entombed in distant realms, so that of you it shall be said,

“ They grew in beauty side by side,  
They filled one house with glee,—  
Their graves are severed far and wide,  
By mount, and stream, and sea.”

But whether it be so, or whether Heaven shall permit you to die on the spot of your birth, where tender hearts and early loves shall minister to your departing hours, if you have been truly virtuous, a pious son, a devoted brother, and faithful and true in every domestic relation, you will go down to the grave amid precious tears ; every token of your memory will be honored and loved ; and your multiplied virtues, though they bound you to your friends as in bands of gold, and they " grieve at such goodness lost," will be an earnest of a future reunion, an incentive to prepare to rejoin you in the mansions of bliss, and to share with you the consummation of a hope full of immortality.

## CHAPTER V.

### DUTIES TO SOCIETY AND COUNTRY.

**Words of Miltiades at Marathon — Youth viewed as a time to prepare for the Social and Public Duties — Political Parties — Ignorance in parts of our Country — Petition to abolish common Schools in Pennsylvania — Love of Liberty — Lafayette — Youth of Washington — Young Men who have just passed their Minority — Their Temptations to seek Office, and to promote others' election by wrong means — Each of them a Sovereign — Culture of Intellect and power of speaking in Public — Lyceums — Conversation — Observation — Virtue necessary in Politics — Patriotism — The Swiss — Avarice of Rulers — Anecdote — Disinterestedness of Revolutionary Patriots.**

No one, in meditating on his various relations and duties, can avoid feeling that he has not only private obligations and claims to satisfy, but many arising from his public relations. Should he be disposed, from whatever cause, to lose sight of, or undervalue his importance as a member of Society, the monitor within him,



unless dead to its office, would bring home with a fearful energy the solemn inquiries, "what is thy Country? Of what people art thou?" Art thou faithful to the high responsibilities imposed upon thee as a social being? In a Republic especially, where the voice of the people is supreme, and where, of course, the individual is every thing, these questions have a meaning and a power, such as no other form of government can give them. And if the time shall ever come, in which each and all, from the highest to the lowest, do not weigh that meaning, and answer to their consciences what their duty in this matter requires of them, the Republic will be unsound at the core; it will have no principle of life; it will be hastening to the tomb of the nations.

If this view be correct, then is there no interest touching the hopes and the prospects of this Nation, in which it has at this moment so much at stake, as in the right education of its Young Men? "If we conquer," said Miltiades, as he marshalled his forces on the immortal plain of Marathon, "if we conquer, we shall make Athens the greatest city of Greece." "If,"—may the genius of our country say with a still stronger propriety, as the successive generations advance to take charge of her interests,—“if these young men shall conquer themselves, and shall truly love, and live for the land of their birth, then shall this be, through all ages, the greatest nation on the globe.”

Your attention is invited through this Chapter, young reader, to a contemplation of the claims which Society, the Community and the Country are now urging upon you. Let me speak first, of yours as a season of *Preparation for the discharge of the Social and Public Duties.*

The time is near, when all these individuals around you must resign their several stations, and commit to your hands the business they now transact, and leave you to fill their offices, and direct the influence, and wield the power which they, in their various relations, had possessed. Not only will each of you come forward to decide by your vote, who shall hereafter perform the duties, civil and political, required by the institutions of our land; but from your number must the candidates for these offices, and their final incumbents be taken. The care of our Schools, the affairs of Town and State, the administration of every public concern, from the details of the smallest village, up to the all-affecting transactions of the Chief Magistrate and the Congress of the Nation, will soon be consigned to you, and will depend for their good or evil tendencies on your personal character. It will be for you to say, whether your children shall enter upon life in the enjoyment of that bright inheritance bequeathed to you for future transmission, or shall lose the benefits of all these Institutions, and become a prey to strife, anarchy, disorganization and destruction.

Under a free government there are usually many *Political Parties*. These involve questions that reach the very foundations of the national fabric. The young man, as he looks forward, should feel it his duty to prepare himself for the trial that here awaits him. If he live on, thoughtless upon these points, until the period arrive which calls him to the ballot-box ; or if he begin now to adopt and defend the sentiments of his father, his companions, or his neighbourhood with an ignorant earnestness, what has his Country to hope from him ? What but that he will make a fit subject for the unprincipled demagogue, to be moulded and managed at his will ? Having never exercised an independent judgment on the great principles of government, he is totally unqualified to decide in new emergencies and trying circumstances what ought, and what ought not to be done. Does the Country desire such men to control her destinies ? No, she asks for a race of young men that will sustain her institutions from principle ; that have first made it their business to understand the elementary principles of the government ; and have then taken their stand, and firmly resolved, that, be they with the many or the few, with friend or foe, they will maintain their ground, and act on their doctrines.

We may name, as of primary importance in a preparation for the duties of a Republic, an

acquaintance with its History, civil and political. "Not to know what was before you were, is," as has been well said, "to be always a child." If, then, you design hereafter to be men; if you would not be always in the tutelage of life; if you would bring to the support of our public institutions minds and hearts matured for that service, you must be thoroughly conversant with the annals of our fathers, the founders of this Republic. What were their deeds? What was their spirit? Did they toil for selfish purposes, to make gain of their country, or to raise themselves in office at the expense of the public interest and happiness? On what were the foundations of our National and State governments laid? What is the record of the Federal Convention, and of the establishment of the Constitution of this Union? For what object was it framed; and what are its provisions and specific details? The youth, who cannot answer these questions, who is ignorant of the very elements of our political system, is surely unfit for a freeman. Though years have rolled over him, and a certain parchment permits him to come forward with his vote, he is still but a boy. And if he, and those equally unqualified for that service, are to control the destinies of this Nation, then woe, woe to its safety.

And is it not true at this moment, that a mournful ignorance on the fundamental princi-

ples of a Republican government prevails through the land? Should I err in saying, that little less than half of this great population know absolutely nothing on this subject? It is computed that one and a half millions of children are growing up in the land, without receiving a common school education! A fact recently (1835) occurred in that very State where the immortal Declaration of Independence was signed, which may well startle and put us to the blush. Thirty-one thousand persons petitioned the Legislature of Pennsylvania for the abolition of Public Schools, and of these, sixty-four individuals could not write their own names! If our young men are to be thus prepared for their political duties, what can we anticipate but the worst that the despots of the Old World have prophesied as our fate? Let not a son of this Republic give occasion for their sarcastic predictions. Though your early instructors should have failed, — as too often occurs, — to implant in your minds a knowledge of the History and the Government of your Country, neglect not in your more mature years to acquire it. Educate yourselves on this subject. Not only peruse the letter of the Constitution and the Laws, but comprehend and imbibe their life-giving spirit.

There is no object which most young men so ardently desire as Freedom. They look forward earnestly and impatiently to that day

which is to make them their own masters, to place them in a situation, where they can act in all things for themselves. And there is not on earth a more noble spectacle than he exhibits, who is thoroughly qualified for freedom.

But let the young politician understand wherein true liberty consists; let him perceive that it is not the right to do everything he chooses, but that measure of freedom, which is consistent with the rights and enjoyments of his neighbours and countrymen. Let him stand aloof from the baneful power of the aspiring and selfish, who would teach him that licentiousness is liberty. If such be his character, there is nothing patriotic and disinterested we may not reasonably anticipate in his conduct.

Such was the venerated Lafayette, whose bosom burned, in his earliest days, for Political Liberty; and who proved himself, at the youthful age of nineteen, an intelligent friend and heroic asserter of that sacred cause. Such was that twin-spirit with him, the Father of our country. Wonderful as he was in his meridian days, for his devotion to the Military defence and the Civil salvation of this land, he was no less remarkable while yet a youth, for his enlightened and unquenchable thirst for liberty. Go back to his very childhood, and you see the promise of his illustrious maturity. Already has the vision of his country's future glory dawned on his mind. The clouds seem to part

before him. His prophetic eye discerns a light that none other can. Freedom, joined with wisdom and prudence, was the prize which fired the young patriot's soul. Sons of this honored sire, this herald of liberty to a nation and a world, be conscious of your relationship to him. Muse on that revered example; commune with his spirit; enter within the veil of that unrivalled character, and your country will hail the hour that shall summon you to take part in her counsels and her honors.

But the class of young men includes many, *who have already past that period in which the Law designates them as Freemen.* The season of discipline is with them exchanged for the trying time of action. This stage of life is every way important. A stand is now to be taken for all coming years. It is, with not a few, the all-decisive day. This is especially true in our Country. For the tendency of our institutions is to hasten the younger members of the community forward to public and responsible stations. There seems to be an increasing disposition of this kind in the present age. The great interests of society, both civil and moral, are already, to no inconsiderable extent, entrusted to this class of our citizens. We have our "Young Men's Associations," to promote the great objects of reform; to suppress disgusting and pernicious vices; to instruct and elevate the poor, the unfortunate, the degraded and oppressed; to accomplish, in fine,

every good purpose of the times. This is, in one respect at least, a bright omen for our future prospects. For the enterprise, perseverance, and freedom from prejudice, which mark this period of life, qualify it thus far, to lead in the arduous work of moral reform.

But there are Duties of a pressing importance connected with the fact we have stated. They, who are stationed in the van of Social Reform, must possess, not only a superior courage, but a wisdom, a knowledge, and a prudence that shall make their movements judicious and safe. If they lack these qualities, their activity and energy will but cause the more signal disasters in their course. Our young men now look up to the highest stations in the gift of the people, with the undoubting conviction that nothing prevents their reaching them, nay, that a general impulse encourages them to aspire to such posts. How desirable is it, how indispensable to the welfare of the community, that they should be distinguished for their intelligence, sobriety, love of order and of virtue. Nothing can supply the want of these qualifications. Let our youthful republican feel this truth. Let him strive, I will not say to obtain, but to be prepared for, to be worthy of the very highest office in this Nation. Let his be the noble ambition of possessing such a cultivated mind, so patriotic an heart, and such inflexible integrity, that, instead of being compelled to push



himself forward, he shall be sought, and solicited, and borne upward by the spontaneous homage of his friends and fellow-citizens.

It is the duty of our young men to carry the spirit of the education they receive in our Social Institutions, into their Political relations and efforts. The influence of these institutions is, undoubtedly, good. Whether we examine the tendency of the civil, literary, or moral and religious instructions given generally to the children and youth in this land, we cannot fail to perceive that, so far as they extend, they are, for the most part, such as prepare them for their subsequent life. They are taught in the Common Schools such rudiments as fit them for an honest and laudable occupation. In the Sabbath Schools they learn correct principles. The atmosphere of those places is full of salutary influences. From our Pulpits they receive, during their minority, edifying instructions and admonitions. And when they have reached the period of freedom, the Laws not only recognise them as men, but educate them in the mild school of justice and benevolence.

But alas for the Political seminary into which they now enter. There, instead of receiving sound instruction, and being inducted into a sphere of pure principles, they are too often taught the arts of intrigue, cunning and duplicity; and initiated in that miserable sophistry, which makes all conclusions correct,

that promote their personal aggrandizement. Instead of peace, harmony, and a brotherly affection for one another, they are taught lessons of strife, alienation, a reckless rivalry and selfishness. An unholy ambition for office too often seizes the mind, and all the unclean spirits, that a venal press, an horde of lawless demagogues, and an idolatry of the powers that be, can commission to this service, enter in, completely neutralize the early education, and make the man, so far as his public relations are concerned, anything but honest and well-principled.

I do not give this as the actual character of a majority of our people at this time, or at any former period of our history. But I ask if the tendency of the political influences among us does not bear this aspect? Is not a young man drawn almost inevitably, if he enter much into public life, in this direction, unless he have that in his own breast that shall resist the evil? If he occupy an elevated station, is he not peculiarly tempted to abuse his power? Are there not those who, to gain his favor, will flatter and deceive him?

And, on the other hand, are there not hundreds and thousands, who, by offering this incense to men in high places, sully their own purity, and miserably degrade themselves? Consider the situation of those by whose voice our rulers are elected. What a temptation is theirs, having wholly mistaken the object of office, or

imperfectly understood it, to give their vote, not for the most honest and capable, but for those who are most loudly extolled, and those who have secured the most active and intriguing supporters.

I will here advert also to another political sphere in which young men are sometimes placed. They are often active at elections, and called to, or take upon themselves, the office of distributing votes and rallying men to the polls. Let them see that they use none but honest and honorable means to accomplish their object. Let the truth and nothing but the truth be told respecting a Candidate they may oppose. Falsehood is never a good ally, and truth, as in everything else, so in politics, is an omnipotent agent. I do not doubt, of course, that many a man has gained an election by the dishonesty of his friends. But I know also that every such election is a curse to our Country. For it not only places bad men in office, and entails the disgraceful system of paying their supporters in their own base coin; but every such example paves the way for a worse and a worse. This is the rock by which I fear our National bark will yet founder. He, who can do ought to make the friends of our Candidates for, and incumbents in office, single-hearted in the means they employ for their end, is a public benefactor.

In view of these perils, we can hardly attach

sufficient importance to the demand for *Purity of Principle in our Young Politicians*. "All men are born free and equal." From the doings of Congress, that affect twelve millions of people, down to the smallest circle assembled on the republican principle, this great doctrine prevails. We glory in the words that express it. They are, as they should be, dear to us as the light of heaven. But there is one thought connected intimately with them, which we sometimes forget. It is, that the whole value of our civil rights, and our religious freedom, depends upon the personal character we individually possess. There is no charm in free institutions to sustain themselves and to bless a nation. Liberty, where the individual is the slave of his neighbor's opinion, or still worse, of his own passions and appetites, is a mere sound.

Let us analyze this truth. To whom is the sovereign power of this nation confided? "To the People," you answer. And who are the people? Not our Senators, Representatives, Judges, or subordinate Magistrates. Not our Chief Magistrate himself. These are intended to be only the organs of the People; to frame such laws as they desire; to administer justice, and to direct the several branches of government precisely as the People wish them to do. No other view of the subject is consistent with republican principles. Who then, the question recurs, are the People here meant? Every le-

gally qualified individual, rich or poor, young or old, high or low. Each freeman of this country is therefore a Sovereign; and he needs the same independence of mind, the same personal virtues, and sense of personal responsibility, as he would if clothed in purple, and wearing a diadem.

Does some one say, "My case is an exception. My influence is trifling; I expect and desire no office, and care nothing for politics; it cannot be of such moment to my Country that I should be and do all you describe." Your neighbor thinks precisely so of his case. A third, a fourth, an hundredth think so of theirs, and with equal propriety. And where shall we place the limit? What becomes of the Sovereign People? Where is our government, and who will be our rulers? A case has occurred, in which the President of the United States was elected by a single vote. Where a majority only is needed, a single individual can secure or defeat the choice. And who can say but you, by voting, may be that very individual? Our Constitution recognises no aristocracy, no preeminence in rank, birth, or riches, of one above another. It therefore assumes that every man will qualify himself for the various offices in the nation.

Will you say "I have no particular interest, and therefore no responsibility in these matters?" Who then has? Legislators do not

elect themselves. And yet without them laws cannot be enacted. So that all must perceive, that beyond the Legislator, there is somewhere, of necessity, a Supreme Power. That power is lodged, a part and portion of it, in the breast of every freeman. How indispensable then is it, that we, each and all, educate ourselves for this Sovereign station.

Having this view of his individual importance to the community, the young man will at once perceive the necessity of possessing a *liberal and well furnished MIND*. Under a despotic government, the less knowledge the subject has, the better citizen does he make; for ignorance alone would keep him content with his lot, and render him a fit slave for tyranny. But beneath free institutions, where the people enact all the laws, elect their own rulers, and these from their own ranks, there intelligence, mental culture, and general information, are the very corner-stone of the government. Without these, the people cannot judge between real and imaginary rights; between Statutes framed on the eternal basis of truth and equity, and those virtually unjust enactments, that an ignorant frenzy will sometimes demand.

There is no doctrine more true, than that "Nature wills, that those who think should govern those who toil." We are all working-men, and therefore to govern ourselves well we must all think, all read, observe, learn, and

know. A man destitute of knowledge is likely to affirm that he wants no learned legislators. Let all men in the country, he will say, be educated like me. Give us laws made by people that know nothing more than ourselves. But experience has shown, that this want of education is the great cause of our fickle legislation in this country. Had we always chosen intelligent, far-sighted men for our rulers, most certainly we should have escaped this crying evil of enacting laws to-day, which to-morrow will repeal.

Were the Hancocks, the Adamses, the Quincys, and the Otises, who erected the pillars of this Republic, men of small information? Which of the Chief Magistrates of this nation, can you name, eminent for his wisdom and integrity, that was not either a College-bred, or what is often far better, a self-educated and well-educated man? Be then determined, Young Men of America, that you will acquire knowledge, enlarged and liberal views on all subjects.

We have fallen on a period of social disorders, agitations, and excitements. There are signs of a spirit of anarchy in the very midst of us, which make us sometimes tremble for the weal of our institutions. How shall we allay this spirit? There are but two methods of securing order, and respect for right and justice through the community, by force of arms and severe laws, and by general Education. Who

can hesitate in saying which we should choose? Let the opinion of a tried friend of our country be heard on this point. "A good education," says he, "will, I believe, prove more effectual for the prevention, than the law can for the repression of disorders. Severe Laws and Standing Armies are less powerful than Intelligent Minds." Let our young men, among whom, from their ardent feelings, violence and tumult are likely to originate, guard themselves against this temptation by cultivating their minds, and storing them with correct principles of thought, and of action.

I have already alluded to *Lyceums*, as a means of improvement for young men. I prize them most highly, not only for the information they impart in the form of Lectures, but as a means of self-education, and of mutual improvement. They are admirably adapted to quicken the intellectual powers. The Debates, which are there held, give a facility in communicating the thoughts and feelings in public. And we have seen how needful it is under a Republican Government, that every citizen should take a part in sustaining its institutions. We are all candidates for rulers; and we should all be prepared, if called to the duty, to act as delegates from the People, and to exert that influence, which our station shall require of us. But how can we, on public occasions, when great interests are at stake, offer our opinion, and defend our



country, the rights of our State, Town, or neighborhood, unless trained to the habit of expressing, fluently and correctly, our own sentiments?

Of what value is the *right* to utter and diffuse each his opinion, if we have not the *ability* to do it? Shall we neglect any means of acquiring the power to exercise what we so tenaciously, and so properly, claim as a privilege? In Rome he was not esteemed competent for the duties of a citizen, who was unable to express himself readily and properly in public. Should the sons of this far more favored country fall behind the ancients in that talent?

Yet who has not been pained at witnessing, in our Legislative Assemblies, men of superior intellect obliged either to remain silent, or to speak in an awkward, embarrassed, abrupt, disconnected, prolix, or, in any case, most uninteresting manner, merely from the want of early discipline in public speaking? Though you may never attain to, or desire high stations, yet were it not wise in you and in every American, freeborn and independent as he is, to be able, whenever and wherever he shall be called to the effort, to defend by his lips the principles of equity, of justice, of social and national well-being? Improve then faithfully the opportunities afforded by the Lyceum, and every other opportunity, for acquiring this talent.

I would name *Conversation* as another valu-

able means of mental cultivation. We can gain more knowledge on many topics by a free interchange of opinions, than by reading, reflection, or any other solitary method of improving the intellect.

Again, young men are sometimes precipitate in the formation of their opinions. This exposes them to error. To escape this evil, they should compare their own views with those of other men, especially of the enlightened and wise, by personal intercourse. The mind, when left to its own contemplations, is insensibly drawn toward those opinions which suit its natural inclination. It contracts peculiarities of reasoning, and wrong habits of thinking, which confirm it often in ludicrous errors. Nothing will preserve, or restore it from this illusive state, like collision with other minds. Our faculties, when in contact with others, are put on the stretch. We examine our notions in all points of view, and often detect in them fallacies, which, without this exercise, might have been forever unobserved.

But, to make sure of improvement in society, we must engage in conversation with correct views of its uses. We must resolve to gain good, while with others, no less than to impart it. In every interview with our fellow-men there is danger of vanity. It is a besetting sin with us all. Beware, young man, studiously, of its snares. It will steal upon your lips when

you scarce dream it is there. Do not talk to communicate your plans, or tell what you have done ; in general, say as little as possible of yourself in any way. That is the only effectual safeguard against vanity. Speak to others of their business, habits, prospects and opinions ; and, if you advance your own views on a subject, let it be after you have heard theirs. Never dogmatize, nor be vehement, loud and positive. A modest manner is the silken cord which draws knowledge from our associates. Cultivate humility, and you may, while in company, improve yourself almost beyond assignable limits. Nor is this at all inconsistent with the benevolent habit of imparting instruction to others, when the occasion requires it.

I will add one more habit, as conducive to your intellectual progress ; and that is *Observation*. Human life is a watch-tower. The senses were given man before books were invented, or any of those multiplied facilities for inward culture, which civilization and art have supplied him. The wisdom of God is displayed in this gift. It is a higher and better wisdom than ours ; let us accept the gift gratefully, and employ it aright. Let every young man at once take his stand on the watch-tower. Look, listen, learn, wherever you go, or are. Something is always transpiring, that will reward your attention.

Would you form pleasing manners, and make

yourself acceptable, that you may be useful to the world? Mingle in good society, and observe what manners are agreeable to yourself and to others. You will learn in this way what mere reading or instruction would never have taught you, that the manner in which a thing is said, or done, has often much more effect than the matter concerned in it. We have heard it said of more than one Chief Magistrate of this Nation, that by visiting the different sections of the Union, and by affable intercourse with the people, he gained an influence which nothing else could have secured him. Do not undervalue this suggestion. It need be no selfish motive that prompts you to regard these external points; for Christianity bids us "be courteous," and we may be so from Christian Principles.

If you have the good of your country at heart, and desire by every laudable means to promote it, you will strive to become an enlightened and refined man, that you may be a well-furnished citizen. Let your eyes and ears be ever open, and you will observe, in the slightest incidents, means and materials for personal improvement.

To knowledge add VIRTUE. There is no other security but this, that the most cultivated intellect will be devoted to good, rather than to evil purposes. We need, in this land, new institutions to awaken throughout the community a sense of rectitude, and a moral life. Many

as there are in some sections of this country who discountenance learning, and would bring all minds to their own low level, there are still more, who think the personal character of our rulers and office-holders of no consequence whatever. To our shame be it spoken, that it has even grown to a maxim among us, that, "in Politics all is honest." That is, he who is bound to be a good citizen, and a just and kind man in all his private relations, the moment he steps forth in public, may intrigue, deceive, and disregard the interests of his country, and care and toil for himself alone, with impunity. And he, who may not break one law of God at home, may go to the ballot-box and help into office a man, who, he does not himself believe, has the fear of God before him, merely because he will raise him, or his friend a step higher, or because he is the idol of his party, or for some other equally dishonorable and unjustifiable reason.

Are these things right? Every unpolluted heart says no. Every ingenuous young man, I am persuaded, says no. Resolve then to set your face against such proceedings. Regard yourself as obliged, in all your political duties and efforts, to be governed by principle. Give not your vote for a candidate until you are convinced he is honest, as well as capable. Use no means, — feel that God, reason, and conscience forbid you to do it, — to bring yourself

into office, save they are fair, manly and open. And other you will never need, if your character be what it ought. For the people soon discover and reward merit ; or if they do not, their favor is not worth your pursuit.

The Romans required every youth to pass through the temple of Virtue, before entering that of Fame. Let this be your course. Never allow yourself to doubt, that however unpropitious, at times, circumstances may be to the man of principle, yet, in the end, "promotion and honor," the highest real honors upon earth, await him. With this spirit you will be strictly upright, whether in office or out of it. In every political duty you will stand fast by integrity. And she will maintain you, and make all things in the end conduce to your true good, and thence to your true happiness.

Cherish, in a word, an unalloyed Patriotism. This sentiment is recognised by our holy religion. Jesus Christ manifested an ardent attachment to the land of his birth. He shed a generous tear for the doom that awaited his beloved Jerusalem ; and delighted to call Israel his own. It is a sentiment founded in our very nature ; it is common to all nations. The dweller on the rugged Alps builds his cottage amid eternal snows, and where the beetling avalanche often threatens his life. And why ? Because it is the spot of his birth. Through the strength of this feeling the

" Loud torrent, and the whirlwind's roar,  
But bind him to his native mountains more."

And shall not *we*, whose lines have fallen beneath genial skies, and on fertile fields, love our native soil? But this is the lowest ground on which we are bound to cherish a spirit of patriotism. We inhabit a country that claims our affection for its moral advantages; and for its intellectual, social, and political privileges. God has given us that richest of earthly possessions, a land of Liberty. We are raised by our free institutions to the very pinnacle of outward blessings. There is no greater temporal gift, I will not say in the power of man, but at the disposal of Providence, than to be born, as we were, under an independent, liberal, representative government. Kings look upon us with envy and jealousy. And it speaks to our praise. The oppressed and enslaved nations of the earth turn towards us; humanity, from the dust into which despotism has trodden her, looks up to us, and hope thrills through her bosom. What a cause do we plead. What unimagined destinies are connected with the success of our institutions!

But the republic has no magic power to uphold and perpetuate itself. Liberty, like every other gift of Heaven, demands our efforts to secure and consummate its great objects. And this work will soon come into the hands of the young men of America. It is they who are

called upon emphatically to cultivate a sincere love of their country. They must espouse its interests with zeal, and cleave to them with unconquerable perseverance. It depends now on their spirit, whether these noble institutions shall be sustained in their original purity, and transmitted to the next, and to all succeeding generations, or whether the people, corrupted by selfishness, ambition and avarice, shall bring desolation and disgrace on themselves, their country, and the universal interests of freedom.

Let me add, in this connection, one point more. Our patriotism is endangered by an unhallowed *Love of Gain*. I have spoken on this topic in a previous chapter; but its importance will be my apology for alluding to it again in another connection. Do we not exhibit the spectacle of a people becoming more and more absorbed in worldliness, in a passion for wealth, in a fixed determination, not to be as virtuous as possible, but to make as much money as possible? If it be so, we are certainly entering that downward path, which the nations of old pursued to their final destruction.

We say nothing here of the general moral desolation caused by this spirit, but confine ourselves to its Political bearings, and ask if our Government is not fast hastening to be swallowed up by avarice? Is not office sought by very many among us, as a means of pecuniary aggrandizement? If it be, then let the



honest patriot tell us what are our prospects. Let history, the fate of rapacious Carthage, and of the finally over-opulent Sparta, warn us of the future. Let our own common sense decide, whether the public good can be subjected to the sordid, mercenary views of individuals, with impunity to the State? Young man, if you love your country, suppress in your bosom every emotion of avarice. Give yourself up to amassing property as the whole end and aim of your life, and you will inevitably quench thereby your public spirit; you cannot remain a true patriot; you will prove unworthy of your relationship to him, who served his country in the dark hour of her Revolutionary struggle, with no compensation; and who would sooner have cut off his right hand, than suffer it to minister to his private wealth at the cost of his bleeding country.

Hold steadfastly in view the manly patriotism, the lofty, self-devoted spirit of the founders of American Independence. "Tell the king of England," said one of them, who was tempted to betray his country, "that I am not worth buying; but that such as I am, he is not rich enough to buy me." Such were the hearts that beat in many a breast through those trying days. If they "scorned to be slaves," they scorned still more, temptations to make gain at the public expense. They entered upon office, not from the contemptible motive of cupidity, or

from personal ambition, but from a noble desire to serve their country. Filled and animated by this godlike disinterestedness, they first gave her their prayers, and then laid on her altar their time, their substance, their toils and their counsels ; and when called to it by duty, they poured out their blood like water.

Have you, young man, no labor to perform, and no sacrifices to make, in this sacred cause ? A response to this question breaks on the ear from the tomb of a patriot, who died on the morn of our Revolutionary struggle. He repeats the eloquent strain he then uttered ; and assures us it applies to the prospects before us. " Who is he that boasteth of his patriotism ? Has he vanquished luxury, and subdued the worldly pride of his heart ? Is he not yet drinking the poisonous draught, and rolling the sweet morsel under his tongue ? He, who cannot conquer the little vanity of his heart, and deny the delicacy of a debauched palate, let him lay his hand upon his mouth, and his mouth in the dust. Now is the time for this people to summon every aid, human and divine, to exhibit every moral virtue, and call forth every Christian grace. The wisdom of the serpent, the innocence of the dove, and the intrepidity of the lion, with the blessing of God will yet save us from the jaws of destruction."\*

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\* Josiah Quincy.

Am I an alarmist? Has this republic no more shocks to encounter? Is there no exigency now in our path? Let it not be so thought. Let it not be said that our lot is full of ease, that we have but to lie down and repose beneath the tree that was planted, amid tears, and perils, and sufferings, by our generous fathers. Harder battles than they fought, unspeakably harder ones than those of the sword and bayonet, are still to be fought. We are to contend against the insidious attacks of intriguing demagogues; against the frenzy of popular passions; against the rage of the multitude, ignorant, prejudiced, inflamed and infuriated by unseen guides, till they trample on law, order, property and life. We are to contend against ourselves, against all those mistaken views and narrow motives, that come between us and the welfare of the community around us. God grant us the victory! May we show, that it is not only "sweet and honorable to die for one's country;" but that a higher meed awaits him, who lives for it, virtuously, consistently, patiently and perseveringly.

## CHAPTER VI.

### RELIGION.

Cannot a Young Man dispense with it — Religion not an unpleasant Subject — Prepares us for Old Age — An advantage in our Secular Affairs — Teaches Self-knowledge, and a correct estimate of the World — A support in Trouble, and in the prospect of Death — Friendly to the culture of our Noblest Powers — Conditions — Bright Views — Three classes uninterested in it; those who think it needless; those who value it, but not for themselves; and the thoughtless — All hope for its rewards, an harvest without seed — MEANS — The Truth — The Sabbath; its observance vital to Christianity — Benevolent Operations of the Age.

It may be the opinion of some, who have perused the preceding pages, that I have already completed all the instructions needful to prepare young men for every effort and prospect before them. The value of a pure Moral Character, the peculiar Dangers of Youth, their Duties to Home, and to Society and their Country, have been now, as far as our

limits would permit, expounded and enforced. "Should I come up to the standard there raised, what more," the young man may ask, "can I need? My armor will then be entire."

Not so says the Son of God. For we have part of a conversation on this very point, between him and a young man who came, with the view of himself just expressed, to inquire of Jesus, "what he should do to inherit eternal life." It was an occasion to draw forth from him, who could so well unfold it, a declaration of the whole duty of man. To his question Jesus replies, "if thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments. All these have I kept," was the answer, "from my youth up." Jesus then beholding him, could not but "love" him for his strict obedience to the moral law. But still he said to him, "one thing thou lackest. Sell all thou hast, and give to the poor, and come, take up thy cross and follow me." That is, sacrifice every thing you have, for my sake. This you will do only by cherishing a true love to God, my Father and your Father. *You must become Religious.* PURSUE RELIGION, AND YOUR CHARACTER WILL BE FINISHED. You will then possess all you will need to qualify you for eternal life.

But why must a young man add religion to his other estimable qualities? Can he not in some way dispense with it? No; not if he desires and intends to be perfect, to build up

his character from the foundation to the dome. "The Christian," it has been well said, "is the perfect style of man." Without the ideas of a Spiritual World and a Supreme Being, the final Awarder of our destinies, there is a void within. You may be prudent, wise, just and benevolent; you may have qualities that even Jesus could not behold without loving you, and yet "one thing be lacking." The arch may be complete, but the key-stone is wanting.

In the culture of purity of heart, that is of real goodness, there is no other instrument but Piety, or a supreme love of God and regard to his will, that can insure success. On what consideration drawn from this world can you always depend? Shall it be reputation, human opinion? That is undoubtedly a support to one's virtue. As an ally in the cause of duty, its importance can hardly be overrated. But let it be your main motive of action, let your accustomed and highest standard be: "How shall I best save appearances," and nothing will be more fluctuating and hollow than your virtue. All you inquire is: "What will be popular? How shall I avoid giving any one offence? Can I not bring myself to this, or that course, rather than displease this, or those individuals?"

You may here say, that you would make your own sense of right, that is conscience, your great guide, and that could never mislead you.

But you forget that conscience may be warped ; and that we may so often disregard or silence its monitions, that it shall at length be seared as with a hot iron. And should this ever become your case, what is to restore your purity, what to arouse the dormant principle within you, to life and action ? If there be no power beyond and above your own bosom to do this, it plainly can never be done. But let the Bible, that book which embodies all true religion, or let God by his Providence, speak to your soul, and though sunken in error, darkness and sin, the dead shall awake and live. So long as a regard to the Deity is not wholly extinct within a man, there is hope that he may be reclaimed from almost any depth of depravity. For though the branches are lopped off, and even the trunk seems decayed, there is life in the root. It may yet send up new shoots, and bear more fruit. But let that sentiment be effaced, the tree is then dead, root and branch.

“ But Religion,” we are told, “ is an unpleasant subject, and to call a young man to seek and pursue it, is a hopeless task. He wants more cheerful pursuits than this.” Let him, we reply, be cheerful ; let him be happy. It is for this very purpose we present to him the claims of Religion. If we believed it would diminish one particle of his true happiness, we would be forever silent in this matter. But we do not. As regards, indeed, sensual, unlawful

pleasures, we would dissuade him from the love of these ; and for the very reason that they unfit him for substantial and permanent enjoyments. He may derive from them, it is true, a transient gratification, but how brief it will be, and how often succeeded by enduring and intense sufferings.

Religion, on the other hand, leads to solid and abiding happiness. It is a part of our very Nature. We are constituted Spiritual beings. There is a life within us, which can no more subsist upon animal pleasures, or any outward indulgences, than the body can live without food or air. There are faculties capable of loving God, and which find their full scope in no other being. And it is absolutely essential to the perfect education of a young man, that these faculties should be expanded and exercised. And this exercise is indispensable also to his true happiness. For he, who neglects any part of his nature, is made to suffer for that negligence. If you fail to exercise your body, it becomes weak and sickly. So of the moral powers and affections. They cannot lie torpid with impunity. To love no human being, and to do no good in the world, is the sure road to misery. Just so in regard to our Religious capacities. He, who gave them to man, intended that they should be developed, and kept in vigorous action. And you may precisely as well think to stop the flow of your blood, and



still be in full health, or shut yourself up in a cell, and see and love no mortal on earth, and be yet perfectly happy, as to be so in a state of irreligion and impiety.

"But Religion," says the young man, "is always associated in my mind, with dull, uninteresting and gloomy things. I feel a strong desire to enjoy myself, but piety—the very thought of it sends a chill through my heart." And why does it thus affect you? One reason is, that you have never given it any connected and serious attention. How many other things are recommended to you by their advocates, and pursued, you can see, by those who love them, with the keenest interest, but dull themes to you, because you have not examined, and understood them, and perceived their whole bearing. It is on this account that Politics, Slavery, Temperance, Peace, and other like subjects, interest some persons exceedingly, while to others, they are equally dry and irksome. Let a man study and act in a matter at first ever so indifferent to him, and it soon engages his heart. Have you done this with Religion? If not, how can it seem to you other than uninteresting and cheerless?

You have seen, perhaps, gloomy Christians. You know that in sickness, on death-beds, and at the funeral hour, Religion is exhibited, and its claims are enforced. It speaks, moreover, of some things confessed to be dimly perceived,

“seen through a glass darkly.” And these are the only aspects in which you have hitherto viewed it. Do it not, I beseech you, this manifest injustice. What you now look upon are the clouds of the Spiritual Heaven. You see only the low points of the scene. Ascend yet higher, look at the summit of the prospect, and you will see, not clouds, shadows and darkness, but a perpetual sunshine. Try for yourself the qualities of Religion, and you will find in it a light, a warmth and a joy, such as you had never before experienced.

You will find in it, let me add, *a joy better suited to the season of Youth, than to any other period of life.* Do you ask how this is possible? I answer, because you have strong feelings and impulses; and Religion presents to the heart an object sufficient to occupy them all, in their fullest strength. It calls us to love God with our whole heart, soul and strength, and our neighbour as ourselves. It demands a devotion, which you now feel disposed to bestow on some great object. Should you embrace its offers at this age, you would find your whole soul engaged, intensely interested, and perfectly satisfied with the ever-opening prospects before it. Your quick perceptions would be completely occupied, and your vigorous impulses and elastic feelings would be delightfully exercised, by the high points of immortal concern. You would find that your utmost en-

thusiasm did not exhaust the charms of the subject which enkindled it. Wider, and still wider views would be breaking upon you. Sublime meditations, noble enterprises, an exalted and ever-growing faith, holiness and virtue, would absorb and captivate your affections. If you defer an attention to religion till later years, you may, it is true, come to it then with engagedness. But your own good sense will tell you, that a heart chilled by the trials and disappointments of life, or jaded by the cares and anxieties of this world, affords little promise of such a result.

Religion is peculiarly important, moreover, in youth, as a *Preparation for Old Age*. You, doubtless, desire to live many years upon earth, and confidently expect that you shall. But, at the close of these years, you must retire from business and labor, and sit down and review the past. And what will then give you peace? The remembrance of neglected duties? The thought that, when a young man, you lived for pleasure, for money, or for distinction and honor, and put off the claims of Religion, and banished, as far as you could, the sense of God and Heaven from your mind? O no. There was never an old man, who looked back on the sins of his youth with pleasure. But there have been thousands who, as they stood on the verge of the grave, at the close of a long life, have felt an inconceivable joy at the memory of their

early piety. Men can then see this world in its true light. And it dwindles to a mere point, in comparison with the solemn realities of that state, on which they must soon enter.

I will here add a fact familiar to you all, that in old age, the first stages of life are those chiefly in the mind, because most easily recalled. When the powers begin to fail, the events of yesterday are forgotten, while those of years long gone by are fresh in the memory. According, therefore, to the character we sustained in our youth, must be the remembrances of our last days. And on those by-gone scenes shall we build our hope,—if a hope we then have,—of entering the kingdom of Heaven. What a motive is this for seeking religion in the morning of life! How many bitter moments may we save ourselves by so doing. If we think little of piety now, we shall not then. But we shall feel, that the wealth of worlds would be a small price to pay for pleasant reminiscences and an approving conscience.

We shall then, too, contemplate the future. And how truly to be envied are his feelings, who, at that age, can lift up his soul to God, and with devout thankfulness say, "Thou hast been my trust from my youth. I rejoice, and bless thee, that I was saved from the delusion of putting off the chief business of my existence, until this day of infirmities. I can now rest in the precious hope of immortal life with a serene

confidence. The time of my departure is at hand; and I am ready to be offered up." Young man, will you, can you listen to that voice, coming as it were from the tomb, and still say that you are determined to live on in sin, until you become too old to enjoy any longer its pleasures; that religion is to be sought, or rather endured, only by the aged and the dying; and that piety is a yoke you will not consent to bear in your youth?

"But," says our young objector, "were I to become personally religious, it would injure me in my *Worldly Business*. It would obstruct my plans, paralyze my efforts, and prevent me from laying up money, or aspiring to office, as I otherwise could. To succeed in these things, I must give myself wholly to them. But I am now told, that piety requires my whole attention. No, my friend, piety does not forbid your engaging actively and earnestly in business. You mistake its nature, if you think it would take you from your employment, and convert you into a monk. And as to the obstruction to success that you speak of, if by this you mean that, should you become religious, you would not be allowed to forget your soul, and live without God in the world; that you could not then overreach and defraud your neighbour; or that you could not use low, unchristian means to raise yourself into office, I grant that Religion does prohibit these things.

If you want license to practise dishonesty in trade, you must not go to the Bible. If you desire to take advantage of others, and intend, let it cost what it will, to do it, you cannot promise yourself such liberties from the hand of piety. But if you intend to be strictly honest in your dealings with others, and do not think that you "cannot afford to keep a good conscience;" if you wish to be respected in your calling; if you value a good name more than riches or honor, then embrace religion.

For you will mark, let me here say, that so far is true piety from being prejudicial to one's business in life, that, in general, even the vicious and irreligious do, in truth, respect a man whom they believe to be sincerely religious. They look upon him with a far higher estimation, than they do on one of their own character and habits. Hence in their daily transactions, they rely on the word of such a man; they select him to manage their pecuniary affairs; and they will give him credit even in unfortunate and destitute circumstances.

So that genuine piety, instead of being, as you fear, an obstacle in your worldly affairs, would be a positive advantage to you. Without resorting to artifice and fraud; without stooping to a single base action; but by pursuing an honorable and Christian course, you may, by the blessing of God, acquire a competent fortune, and all the influence and distinction you

can reasonably desire. Integrity, honesty, a pure heart, the habitual reference of your conduct to God, everything that Religion requires of you is thus for your present interest. So that, on this account, "godliness has not only the promise of the life which is to come, but of that which now is."

In another point of view piety is favorable to worldly prosperity. What is essential to your success in this life? A knowledge of yourself, of your abilities, and of the objects you may reasonably hope to accomplish. But how can you gain this knowledge? By no method so directly and certainly, as by cherishing a sense of the presence of God, by reflecting that he sees your inmost thoughts, and will call you to account for every secret feeling, affection and motive. This, just so far as you make it a practical conviction, will be a mirror to your heart and life. It will show you the defects of your character, as nothing else could. And to know our faults is, usually, to know ourselves aright. It is this, which will keep you from rash adventures, from undue self-confidence, from extravagant habits, from all the great causes of failure in business, and make you industrious, prudent and judicious, and thus often save you from pecuniary losses.

Piety is important to you at this age because it is the only thing that will enable you *to form a correct estimate of this world, and thus to*

*endure all its Trials.* Yours is the season of hope. Your expectations are naturally sanguine. You dream, perhaps, of success, honor and pleasure unalloyed. But a longer experience than yours has taught every human being, from the creation down to the present day, that such anticipations are not to be realized in this changing scene. Trouble, disappointment and sorrow are the common lot of mortals. We can by no art or power escape them. Now, where is the arm on which we are to lean, when these sufferings come upon us? Religion alone can answer that question. If you exclude that from your soul, you must make up your mind to bear, without mitigation, the pains, however severe they may be, that misfortune, sickness and bereavement will occasion you; to take up the burden of man's sorrows, and struggle on beneath its unalleviated pressure.

But I am pained to leave you thus forsaken and cheerless. You know that unmingled pleasure belongs not to earth. You must believe, when you calmly survey the future, that adversity, anxieties and afflictions will be infused into your cup, as they are into that of all mankind. Know, then, with the same assurance, that there is another world, in which these troubles, if rightly improved, may secure for you an everlasting happiness. They are designed for your discipline, to prepare you for that state. Strike out this truth, and there is

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nothing left to console you, nothing to soften the stern lot before you. But keep this truth in view, and you will go tranquilly through life. Piety will not indeed save you from disappointments and sufferings. Nor will it render you a Stoic ; you will still feel the troubles sent upon you. But every trial will lead you to look forward ; and your prospects in Heaven will make these afflictions, not only supportable, but light, when compared with eternal glory.

There is one event usually looked upon by young persons, as peculiarly terrific ; and yet it is the sure portion of all that live. The thought of *death* is not seldom appalling to those in the bloom of life, and possessed of firm health and buoyant spirits. But is it so of necessity ? Has God hung this event over man, like a sword suspended by a single thread, to fill him with perpetual fear ? No, introduce the power of Religion, and you dispel this gloom from the mind. And will not you, young man, strive to break this yoke of bondage ? Will you suffer an object, which you are able to remove, to threaten and disturb you through life ? And will you call an instrument, that can release you from the most painful idea in your mind, an unwelcome thing ? By placing your affections upon God and Heaven, you can render the thought of death, not only less terrible than it now is, but even familiar and pleasant. By becoming holy, like Jesus and his glorified dis-

ciples, you will come to anticipate their society as perfect bliss, and to look undismayed on that event which will introduce you to their fellowship. How much pleasanter will this be, than to defer to your last hours the securing of a bright prospect hereafter; to have, all your days, one subject interrupting you, at times, with gloomy forebodings, and to feel that you might have been freed from it, but chose to let the spectre haunt you through life.

But there are higher motives than this, for the pursuit of Religion. It recommends itself to your age, *by being friendly to the culture of your Noblest Powers.* There is nothing more prominent in the character of a truly virtuous young man, than his thirst for improvement. He burns for new views, for knowledge, and for the expansion of his Intellect. And this is, moreover, I believe, no rare trait. There are multitudes, I am sure, who feel interested to know how this great end can be accomplished, by what means they can best unfold their intellectual capacities. To all such we would say, that Religion alone can fully develope the powers of the immortal mind.

Consider, for a moment, on what subjects, and with what thoughts, a religious man is occupied. Take the first great article of his belief, that there is a God, and that he is Omniscient, Omnipresent, and infinitely Powerful, Wise and Good. How does the very concep-

tion of such a Being enlarge the mind. Without this conception, man is but little raised above the brutes. But with it, and by it, he is immeasurably exalted in the scale of intelligence. God is the Creator of all individuals, all worlds and all systems. He is the Father of all mankind, attending with equal care to the least and the greatest wants of every living soul. What sublime truths are these !

But if the Religion of Nature so elevates the mind, what shall we say of *Revelation* ? Christianity declares man to be immortal, and this life to be but the infancy of his existence, a state of discipline, to prepare him for a future and an endless life. Now if a man thoroughly believe this doctrine, how entirely must it change his prospects and hopes. His plans will be laid, not for the brief space of three-score and ten years, but for an interminable existence. The strongest intellect cannot grasp those themes, which interest such a mind. We speak of the reading of History, as favorable to mental improvement. But what can all history teach us so grand, and so quickening, as the disclosures of that one book, the Holy Scriptures ? Profane History conducts us through the fortunes of single nations, and of distinguished individuals. The New Testament embraces, in its wide reach, the whole world. God is there set forth, not as the Ruler of some renowned Empire, but of all the king-

doms of the earth. "He weigheth the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance. He taketh up the isles as a very little thing, and the nations are as a drop of a bucket."

We recommend Travelling, as friendly to mental expansion, and to the removal of those prejudices that arise from contracted views. But what region can we visit, that will so expand our minds, as to journey with the inspired writers back to the origin of all things, and thence downward through God's successive Dispensations to man, which terminated in the glorious appearance of a Saviour, who was sent, not to redeem a single country groaning in bondage, nor one generation of sufferers, stretching through the whole earth, but to deliver all nations, through all ages, from the most awful calamity that can come on our race.

Revelation adds to these views, that all men are brethren, members of the same divine family, and their lot inseparably the same. It adds the still greater and more kindling truth, — that which crowns and consummates his destiny, — that man is made in the image of God; that he has infinite capacities; and that if faithful to his powers, he will advance in knowledge, in virtue, in all excellence and glory, through the endless range of eternity.

And now, let me ask the young man, who is fired at the thought of improvement, what he can substitute, as an aid in this work, for the

doctrines here announced to him. If he turn away from the voice of religion, he is inevitably thenceforth a degraded, fallen, hopelessly fallen, being. If, on the contrary, he listen to its call, dwell on its purposes, and obey its injunctions, he rises from the valley of earth and pollution, from the grovelling conceptions and employments of a worldling, and from the narrow sphere of time, up to the dignity, the comprehensiveness, and the inconceivable grandeur of human nature, when enlightened by faith and sanctified by love. With such, which are the true views of religion, you cannot, it would seem to me, reject its offers, and disregard its solemn admonitions.

Does some one say, "You exaggerate the benefits of religion, and pass by all the enjoyments we may have independently of that?" I reply, that the transcendent superiority of religion above all earthly good has not been, and cannot be overstated. It comes to man, a creature of the dust, and doomed to perish like the animal, and tells him he has an Immortal principle within him. It lifts him, from his associates of earth, to a companionship with the Being, who formed and preserves and blesses him. Encompassed with infirmities, it breathes into him an immeasurable power. Subject to sin, and to have the divine image in his soul defaced by it, he has in Christianity the promise of pardon, and of an entire and everlasting pu-

rification from guilt. A want he had hitherto felt, but sought in vain to satisfy, is now met and removed. He becomes spiritually alive. The main current of his affections flows no longer in a narrow and polluted channel, but rolls on with a majestic sweep till lost in the Infinities of Heaven. Every day, his interests are calmly and cheerfully committed to the disposal of a kind Providence. The consciousness of seeking, coöperating with, and enjoying Him, fills his soul with an inexpressible peace. The end of his existence is now being answered. He has entered the right path, and feels that the longer he pursues it, the more shall he respect himself; for conscience will testify that his ways are upright. Let him prosper or fail in this world, let joy or sorrow, life or death, be his portion, he knows that all he most values is secure.

And now, what has the man of pleasure, the slave of sense, or the worldling, to offer, that shall surpass such happiness as this? Will the former bring forth his low, fleeting indulgences, things that cannot satisfy even himself, and ask the Christian, the man of genuine piety, to forsake his religion and join him? Will the careworn worldling come with his piles of silver and gold, and bid the spiritually rich abandon their pursuits for his? Dare these men tell him of their pains and disappointments? Will they candidly open the records of conscience? Are

they ready to disclose the weary hours they pass between their sensual pleasures, and the emptiness, which they so often feel, of all earthly things? No, if they are truly honest, they will say to the Christian, "retain your blessed possession; forsake it not for us. We urge you, instead of coming over to our course, to drink still of your own pure pleasures. And may God grant us, some time to quit our unworthy desires and corrupting pursuits, and join you in securing a solid and enduring happiness."

Having said thus much of the pleasures and advantages of Religion, I am now to speak of *the Conditions on which you may hope to enjoy them*. These correspond to its value. Piety renders one truly happy. But who may enjoy that happiness? Is it right to expect the full rewards of obedience in the commencement of the Christian course? Certainly not. A young man may tell us that he has tried the ways of Religion, and they do not furnish that delight, which the pious ascribe to them. But how did he make this experiment? By meditating, perhaps, a few hours upon serious things; by spending one Sabbath with more strictness than usual; by forcing himself to read his Bible, or reflect on some particular personal fault for a short period. Call you this a fair trial? How do we bring the uninterested scholar to love his studies? Do we compel him to fix his eyes

for one, two, or three hours on his books, and then, if he is not charmed with his task, confess to him that study is always unpleasant? No, we tell him to persevere; and that the longer he applies himself, the better will he be convinced, that the acquisition of knowledge and the improvement of his mind will afford him true happiness.

So must it be in your pursuit of Religion. Consider, in the outset, that it is a vast subject; and that it requires much time, and much patient, self-denying devotion. And believe it to be a great prize, worth the sacrifice it demands. Doubt not that the farther you proceed in the love of God, and in keeping his commands, the more will you understand, and partake of its pleasures.

Habit often renders the most irksome employment at length welcome. How then must it augment our affection for moral and spiritual employments, for those services, which awaken the noblest sentiments of our nature; which possess an intrinsic and eternal interest; which need not, like our daily avocations, that we go and come to accomplish them, but are performed at home, in the solemn quiet of our own souls, and are an ever-present privilege, a part of our divine, inalienable, and glorious birth-right. The path of a young man thus occupied cannot lead to unhappiness. He may be called to toil, resist and struggle; but man was



made for action. He may be visited by trials and sorrows; but his faith will not be consumed, it will be kindled and glow in the fiery ordeal; and his path shall be as the rising sun, which "shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

If you have this true and bright view of Religion, I can think of but one thing that will operate to prevent you from giving yourselves now to that sacred cause, — *shame*, the fear of your companions and of the world. You have sometimes brought your mind almost to resolve, that the best part of your nature shall no longer lie dormant. The thought then flashed upon you, "but how could I bear to be called pious? How could I endure the sneers of such and such a one, who would at once detect my interest in religion? If I could prevent its being known by others, I should be willing, I think, to love and serve God." Is it possible, — let me ask you with the plainness of a personal friend, — is it possible, that you are ashamed of being known as a disciple in that cause, which it would be your highest praise, in the sight of every good man, to advocate? What though this or that individual should deride your regard for religion? Are there not hundreds and thousands, who would think the more highly of you for this very reason, young men, and old men too, whose opinions you cannot but esteem better than that of these jeering triflers? Can

you not think of some pious and upright man, who would hail the day on which you became truly serious, and whose favor you feel would be better to you, than that of all these thoughtless creatures, who are keeping you down to their own dark level ?

Think, too, of offering this plea at the bar of your Judge. "Whosoever shall be ashamed of me," said our Lord, "in this evil generation, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he shall come in the glory of his Father." And if you were now to be summoned before that Saviour, and interrogated on the condition of your soul, would it not fill you with overwhelming shame, and with confusion of face, to offer as an apology for the neglect of Religion, the fear of ridicule ? Which of these companions would attend you there, and give in such testimony as might acquit and save you ? Alas ! when they stood by your dying bed ; when they listened to your parting words, and saw your expiring breath, they would weep for anguish at the remembrance of those hours, in which they made sport with you, of that which must be now your only hope and comfort.

If the preceding remarks are well founded, we may arrange most of those young men, who are habitually regardless of Religion, into these three classes. Those who consider piety as altogether an unnecessary thing ; those who believe it important, but not at their age ; and

those who are entirely unconcerned and thoughtless on the subject.

Reader, are you personally interested in this great subject? If so, we bid you God speed; faint not, fail not by the way, but go on unto perfection; for great is your reward in Heaven.

Are you of opinion that religion is not of indispensable importance? Does a lurking skepticism come over you, when the subject is mentioned? Or have you ascertained, as you think, that a character built upon worldly sanctions will be sufficient to save you? What, then, do you think of the words of Christ to the young ruler? He was, externally, a pattern of good works, so much so that Jesus could not but love him. And yet "one thing he lacked." Does not this forever settle the question between a worldly morality, and true Religion? Has it not cut off the last hope of such as live without God in the world? Forsake then that dangerous ground. Sell all that you have; abandon your dearest earthly dependence, and lean upon God for salvation.

Should you rank yourself with those, who are deferring an attention to religion, till some more convenient season? Be not, I beseech you, thus blind to your own best interests. Begin to love God now; for you have the promise, "They, that seek me early, shall find me." There is no such promise to those who wait till old age, or manhood's prime, before

they seek wisdom from above. Embrace it, then, to-day. Your youthful fervor is suited to this kindling pursuit. If you neglect it to another stage of life, the difficulty will increase, and your power to meet it have become less. Besides, how do you know, that all this time you anticipate, will be granted you? Has the Arbiter of your lot given you a lease of life, for many years to come? Incur not then,—by your love of safety, present and eternal, and by every hope you cherish,—incur not the tremendous hazard of being suddenly, in the midst of your sins, called to give back your soul to its Author and Judge.

There remains but one other class of young men not personally interested in Religion. They are those, who are passing their days in a thoughtless neglect of this subject. If it come to their minds,—as it must to all human beings at times,—it is immediately repelled. They listen to Lectures upon literary subjects, upon the arts and sciences, and upon the external life, with attention, for here, say they, we are concerned in the subject. But Religion, what is that to us? Like the lunatic who met our Saviour in the street, they are habitually saying to the Great Spiritual Teacher, “What have I to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth?”

Could I believe such an one perusing this volume, I would, with affectionate earnestness, repeat his language, “What have you to do

with Religion ?" and would say to him, if you wear the form of a man, you have every thing to do with it. For you desire to be ranked, either with the believer, or the unbeliever. But an Infidel you doubtless are not. The appeal then comes to you with overwhelming power. Believing in a Supreme Being, the Creator, Supporter, and Guardian of all souls ; and believing yourself an immortal being, destined to receive hereafter according to the deeds done in the body, you have commenced this momentous probation with the question, " what have I to do with religion ? All that concerns me, and all I care for is to enjoy myself, to amass property, and to pass respectably through this world." Inconsistent youth ! how can you be dead to a cause, in which, by your own admission, your most precious hopes are immediately involved ? Is it possible you can think so earnestly about schemes of loss and gain, and how you shall acquire human favor, and think nothing of, or be never heartily engaged in laying up an everlasting treasure, and in acquiring honor with God ? You must feel that you have something to do with the rewards of Religion, though you have not with religion itself. The thought flits now and then through your mind, that though you feel no interest in spiritual things, yet you must enter hereafter a spiritual world ; and the hope accompanies it, that you shall there be forever happy. That is, though you neglect

in seed-time to break up your ground and cast in the seed, and leave it to be overgrown with weeds and briars, yet you expect to find, in the autumn, an abundant harvest, waiting only to be gathered. Realize the truth of this illustration, and I am sure you will no longer, not for a single year, no, not for a day, stand condemned of this amazing inconsistency. You will consider and dwell upon the subject, until the holy fire shall burn in your bosom.

When thus convinced of the importance of Religion, and determined to make it your bosom friend, you will naturally inquire, *what Means will best promote this object*. I might specify those usually employed, and enter, profitably perhaps, into their several advantages. But my limits will allow me to speak but briefly on this topic.

Your aim is to become a true Christian; your ultimate purpose is to gain holiness, spirituality, and love. The chief instrument, appointed by God for this end, is the TRUTH. By that alone will your affections be purified, elevated, and enlarged. It is through the understanding, that your heart is to be reached. You can be essentially benefited only by a rational faith.

Bring then to the great work before you a sincere *love of the truth*. Heed not the whispers of prejudice. Forget for the time what others believe; lay no stress on human opinions, but

resolve to follow the dictates of your own conscience. Invoke the Father of lights to illuminate your mind; and then listen to the spirit within you, with a reverent humility, yet with a calm confidence. Study the word of God. Do not simply peruse, but search its pages. Use all the aids within your reach for a perfect understanding of its contents; and never feel that you have attained the whole of divine truth. Consent to be a learner through the present, and through every period of that glorious immortality, on which you have already entered. Stand fast in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made you free. This is the beginning of celestial wisdom; and it will prepare you to reap the full advantage of every other help in your religious course.

*Self-examination, reading, prayer, and attendance on preaching*, are, furthermore, all indispensable to those who aim at Christian Perfection.

I will here dwell a little on one of the means of spiritual edification, both because it is, in some sort, a key to all the others, and because I think the Young Men of this age are strongly tempted to disregard it. I refer to a right observance of the SABBATH. It seems to be the opinion of some among us, that in shunning the old error of a Puritanical, superstitious mode of keeping the Lord's Day, we may go as far as we please in the opposite extreme. I would caution you, my young friends, on this point;

for I believe that the very existence of Christianity depends on a proper regard for the Sabbath. If we have no day solemnly set apart and revered as holy time, we shall soon be absorbed in worldliness, lost to a sense of God and of eternal and spiritual things, and travelling the highway to moral perdition. This experiment has been tried. We have a beacon before us in the example of France. During the period of her bloody Revolution, the observance, — it proved a merely nominal one, — of one day in ten, instead of seven, as a season for Divine Worship, was the precursor of a fearful increase of irreligion, Infidelity, and all manner of vice. Must we learn, that this is the inseparable consequence of a profanation of that day, by our own mournful experience? God forbid it!

I entreat the Young Men of this land to consider this suggestion, and to examine their own personal habits in reference to the Sabbath. Do you keep its hours sacred from pollution? You do not labor, of course, with your hands; but are your *thoughts* occupied as they should be? Merchant, do you never think of your past or your coming bargains? Do you never review your accounts? Has the desire at no time entered your bosom, to indite a letter on this day to some debtor or creditor? Manufacturer, have you forgotten your machinery and operatives and fabrics, in those hours,



when the operations of the soul should have been the theme of your reflections? Young mechanic, have no schemes for new buildings, and no plans about work and wages, been cherished in your mind within holy time? If they have, resolve to amend your error.

I am no advocate for austerities. But I must counsel you, that you give this day to a strict *rest* from your business; that you spend it not in frivolous conversation, or vain amusements; that you make it not a time for indulging your palate, and subjecting the spiritual in base bondage to the animal man; that you pass some portion of these hours in retirement, not to peruse the corrupting novel, but to read useful, moral, and religious works, and to prepare yourself for the arduous discipline that awaits you in the world. If you habitually labor in your secular thoughts and plans on this day, you violate a plain law of your nature, an injunction of Him who wisely commanded in the beginning, that we should "rest from our labors" one day in seven. Many have been driven by a long course of such violations, to insanity, and many to suicide. A moral suicide you will certainly commit, if this be your practice. Heaven preserve you from this awful peril.

Make it your invariable rule to attend the Worship of the Sanctuary. Prepare, too, for this service by previous meditation. And return from church, not to discuss the merits of

the preacher, but to deepen in silence the serious impressions you have there received. If you add to this, the practice of recording with your pen any valuable thoughts contained in, or striking reflections suggested by the sermon, it will prove beneficial to your heart. There is no habit indeed, I may here remark, more useful in promoting our solid and permanent improvement, than this of committing to paper important hints, with our own comments upon them. Every book we read in any portion of the week, every discourse we hear on the Sabbath, every instructive conversation furnishes materials for such a use of our pen. Let them not be lost upon you.

I have alluded to frivolous Conversation, as a departure from the true way of spending this holy season. It is a fault becoming, I believe, alarmingly prevalent among us. We talk of the news of the day, of politics,—and how shall we prevent this, while the Sabbath evening is so often desecrated by partisan meetings on this subject?—we converse upon the success of our business, or the pressure of the times, precisely as we should on a secular day. This is wrong, egregiously wrong. And to our Young Men we must look for that moral energy, which shall reform this evil. Study, wherever you are, to introduce some instructive topic of remark. I do not wish you to speak on religion alone. There are,—to say nothing of others,—

multitudes of subjects connected with the benevolent operations of the age, any one of which would interest and improve the Sunday circles in which you are, or should be, usually found.

Let me here say a word of these Philanthropic Enterprises, as an indirect means of awakening and increasing an interest in religion. I had contemplated saying something of the claims of Sunday Schools, of the great cause of Moral and Social Reform, and of the Religious Institutions of our country, on its Young Men. For all these interests will soon be committed to them, and depend for their support, and their very being, on their exertions. But it has seemed to me on reflection, that if I could excite in their hearts the spirit of Christian faith and love, they would of course, according to their age, and as duty required of them, enter the Bible Class, engage in Sunday School instruction, and contribute, both by their pecuniary aid and by their personal attention, to benevolent objects, and to the maintenance of Religious Institutions.

An opportunity is now presented to young men, in the various Public Charities, for the culture of a pure philanthropy, and for extensive usefulness. They give scope for every individual, who desires to do good, to lend his efforts and influence, according to his taste, talents, and leisure, to any, or every Christian

cause. I dismiss this important topic with a brief notice, because I believe no one, who is personally interested in the subject of religion, will fail to discharge the duty he owes to every good cause in the community around him. Your age is full of generous sentiments. Let piety occupy your heart, and you will not, I am sure, prove delinquent in good offices to others.

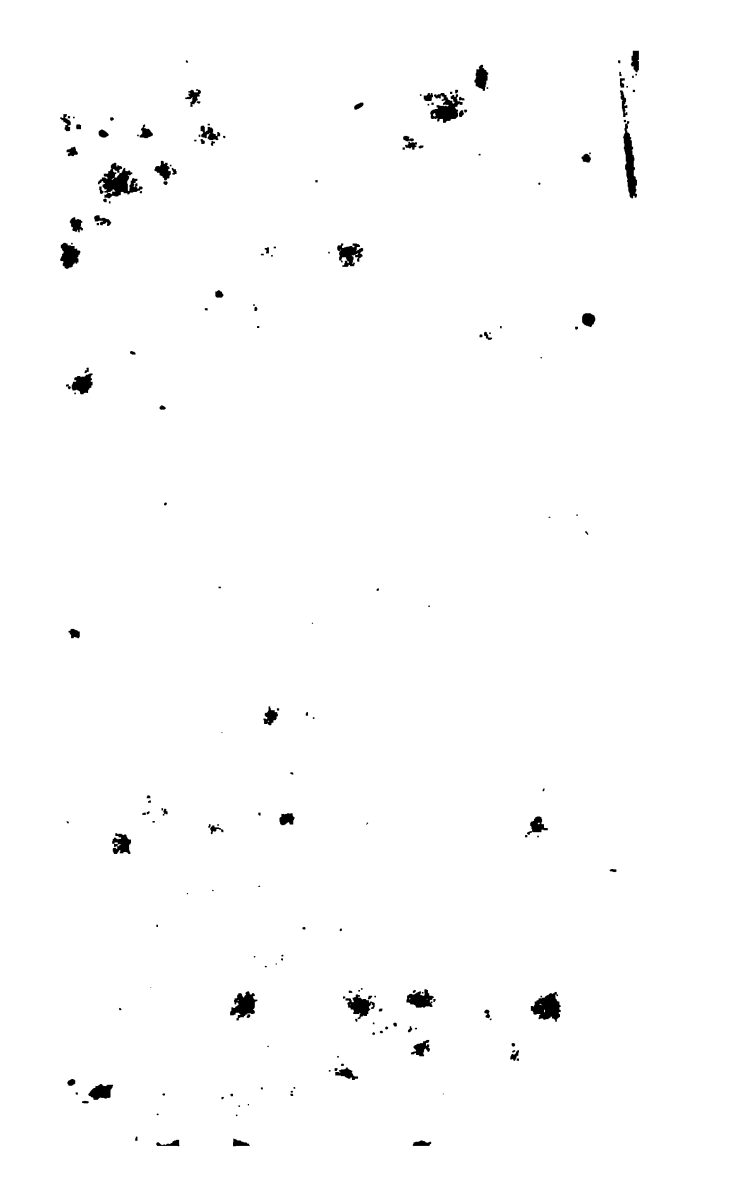
And if you possess but the desire to become truly religious, if, in your own judgement, you are yet out of the kingdom of God, I would say, engage in a Sabbath School, be zealous in doing good to young immortals, devote yourself, indeed heartily to any Christian work, with the purpose of becoming better yourself, and God will give you the reward you seek.

I have now, my young friends, completed the series of remarks I proposed to address to you. More might, perhaps, have been said on the several topics; new ones certainly might have been added. The subject swells in my mind far beyond the limits of so humble an offering as the present. But, such as this is, I beg you to accept it; and, if there be aught of truth in it, to regard it in your life. I have spoken to you with the freedom, the plainness, and the warmth of a personal friend. I implore the Father of all spirits, that this small effort may not be wholly in vain. If I could believe that all, whom this appeal may reach, would value and maintain a Good Character in this world;

would escape the Moral Dangers that beset their path; would bless their Homes, Society and their Country, it would be to me a source of peculiar satisfaction. But one thing would still be wanting. Let it prove that, through the influence of this little book, a few, yes, even one of your number had been awakened to a sense of his *Religious* duties, had been brought to repent of his errors, and firmly resolve to live henceforth to his God and Judge, I should feel that my reward was bountiful. The germs of all that is noble, elevated, and divine, lie folded in your soul. Be religious, and they will open, and bloom, and breathe forth the perfumes of holiness. And at length, in the world of spirits it shall appear, that, while to many it was in vain said in the morning of their life, "One thing thou lackest," you will stand without rebuke before the Lord; having made religion your early choice, and "sold all, and taken up your cross, and followed Christ." Be religious, and angels will rejoice at the tidings; the purpose of your existence will be answered; and in the unseen world you will rise from glory to glory, and enjoy that felicity, which an unfaltering allegiance to God and to duty will always secure.











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